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COMPULSORY STERILIZATION IN INDIA

DONALD P. WARWICK

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CATHOLICS AND E.R.A.

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ON PARDON AND THE DOLE
FRANK GETLEIN

NOT-SO-SILENT JOURNALISTS
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ELIE WIESEL AND THE HOLOCAUST
HARRY JAMES CARGAS

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THREE IN POETRY'S BUMPER YEAR
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NEWS & VIEWS

Aborted Liturgy

A lay woman and two Sisters created consternation at a meeting in Nazareth, Ky., of the National Assembly of Women Religious, when they officiated at a "liturgy," then aborted it just prior to the words of the Consecration.

The women—Sister Anita Caspary, formerly Mother Humiliata of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters of Los Angeles; Sister Mary Reilly, RSM, a parish-team minister from Providence, R.I.; and Mary Beckman, of the Catholic Charities Social Action Office in Brooklyn—took their service through the Liturgy of the Word, the Preparation of the Gifts taken from Eucharistic Prayer #2, the sung "Holy, Holy, Holy," and the prayer just prior to the Consecration. Then, silence; nothing.

After a pause, a delegate seized the microphone, and, referring to women's inability to complete the Eucharistic celebration, said: "I hope you are all as disturbed by this as I am."

They were, both pro and con.

Some felt that the happening treaded on sacred ground. "I wouldn't want to be a part of an effort to go beyond the boundaries of our authorized liturgy," said one Sister.

A priest-observer remarked: "What bothered me was the built-in confusion as to whether people were there to pray or to protest. In my opinion, it was a good demonstration. It was not good liturgy."

The larger sentiment, however, seemed to be on the side of the "celebrants."

A confrontation with the reality of an aborted ministry for women must, in the long run, lead women to appraise their exclusion from Holy Orders in the light of justice, commented Sister Maggie Fisher, RCJC, a member of the executive board of the National Assembly of Women Religious.

However, no single appraisal was more graphic than that of Sister Mary Labunski, MSBT, of Worcester, Mass.: "When Sister Anita stopped, I thought, 'What a shame she was born with the wrong sex organs.' I'm sure Jesus wouldn't care if she had x or y chromosomes."

Trouble in France

Is France on the verge of its first schism since the 14th Century?

Perhaps not, although Rome may have on its hands its touchiest European ecclesiastical problem since its contention with the avant-garde Dutch church in the late 1960s.

Source of the controversy is a Vatican decree suspending French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and the 12 priests he ordained at his pre-Vatican II-type seminary at Econe, in Switzerland [News & Views, 7/4/75]. The action has people and press exacerbated in measure unmatched since France's student riots of eight years ago.

France-Soir, a mass-circulation Paris daily, splashed a front-page column likening Pope Paul's disciplining of Archbishop Lefebvre to the execution of John Fisher in 1535. Pope Paul "did not cut his head off," said columnist Jean Dutourd, "but it is not impossible that this elderly man will now die of chagrin."

What irks the French particularly, more it seems, than ideology or theology, is the fact that Archbishop Lefebvre, 70, former Archbishop of Dakar and of Tulle in France, and former head of the Holy Ghost Fathers, was given no hearing in Rome. On several occasions, Lefebvre reportedly requested an audience with the Pope. He was turned down each time.

Said one French prelate: "The Pope acted like a despot"; his methods were "worthy of Hitler."

Navy Blues

If God isn't on "our" side officially, "we're" on His, or at least the Navy in the northwest U.S. is. Thus the commander of Whidbey Naval Air Station in the State of Washington slated a late-summer, week-long "Old Fashioned Tent Revival" at the naval base for folks of the area, and wrote to clergy urging them to come with their flock.

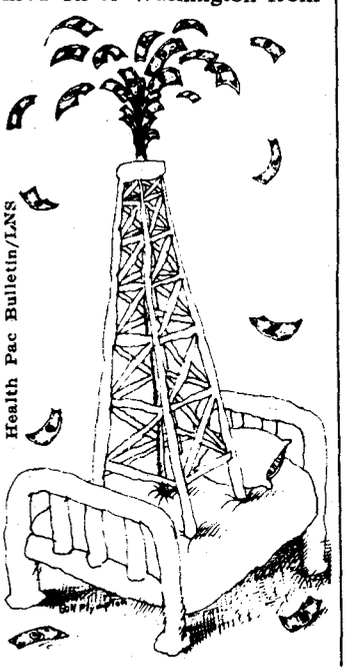
The letter, on Department of Navy stationery, termed the Revival a commemoration of the Bicentennial, a spiritual "pilgrimage," "a campaign for Christ," and signed off:

"Hoping I may be as successful as St. Paul in calling you to Christ, I am, your servant-in-Christ,

"Cmdr. Bernard L. Minetti"

The Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* heard the word, and got up a story headed: NAVAL REVIVAL PLAN DRAWS FIRE AND BRIMSTONE. Not bad headlining.

Meanwhile, protests were fired off to Washington from



church - state separationists, and from clergy objecting to the Navy's going evangelical. Inevitably the Revival scheme was deep-sixed.

As one Lutheran minister remarked, "The Commander's off base."

Who's What

Overview, the Thomas More newsletter out of Chicago, continues its sleuthing of the bicentennial *American Catholic Who's Who*, discovering that the volume fails to include Father Charles S. Coughlin, "radio priest" of the 1930s.

Earlier it had sport with the entries of Jean and Walter Kerr:

Jean Kerr, resides at "1 Beach Avenue, Larchmont Manor, N.Y., wed Walter Kerr on 16 August, 1943 and they have 7 children." . . . Walter Kerr, residing at same address, "married Jean Kerr on 9 August, 1943 and they have 6 children."

Odds and Ends

—*Cross Currents* is reconsidering its motto, *To explore the implications of Christianity for our times.* "It is still appropriate," said editor Joseph Cunneen, "but by now both editors and regular readers are more aware that this needs to be understood in combination with the effort to explore the implications of our times for Christianity." *Cross Currents*, a quarterly, is observing its 25th anniversary.

—*A Chorus Line*, on opening in England, reminded *The Times Literary Supplement* of Robert Benchley's grand-opera character, Schmalz, God of Slight Drizzle. "So far as I am concerned," wrote reviewer Howard Schuman, "Schmalz, God of Slight Drizzle hangs over the evening, standing between the play and the greatness it so clearly lusts after." . . . That's the trouble with Schmalz; he never did get the hang of standing.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Abortion Amendment

Newark, Ohio

To the Editors: I have known Mr. Edward Laylin for some years as a gentleman and a sincere man.

He may indeed be correct in his letter of June 18 *Commonweal* that the amendment to the Constitution regarding "Right to Life" may not have popular support and may be ignored by the people of America.

However, the advocates of a "Right to Life" amendment to the Constitution are not asking protection of the unborn because abortion is a sin, but because it undermines the protection of life for all of us and therefore is a danger to the tranquillity of the community in general. (REV.) WILLIAM E. KAPPES

Crestwood, N.Y.

To the Editors: Your editorial and the subsequent letter from Edward H. Laylin in the June 18 issue re the "Right-to-Life" amendment have prompted my response.

There are two basic facts being conveniently ignored in both cases—namely, that human life does in fact begin at conception, and that all laws are an expression of someone's morality.

Speaking to the first fact—that human life begins at conception—I refer you to the work of Dr. E. Liley, an Australian fetologist, and to *From Conception to Birth,* an American publication whose authors' names escape me at the moment.

Logically we must admit that the product of human conception is itself human, and since we accept the absence of brain waves as a sign of death, then we must accept the presence of brain waves as a sign of life. Brain waves are measurable only 43 days after conception, and probably exist before that, without our capacity to measure them. It is a demonstrable fact that the unborn baby is finished and complete after 12 weeks, and the remaining time in the

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NOW TOWARDS NOVEMBER

Gerald Ford has picked his "Richard Schweiker," and some political pundits are declaring the 1976 presidential contest settled, with the Democrats as victors. Democratic nominee Jimmy Carter himself considers the Ford-Dole ticket less strong than other Republican combinations he and running-mate Walter Mondale might have had to face. Even indomitable latter-day Republican enthusiast John Connally is reportedly so doleful about Republican chances that he turned down the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee, believing it too late to mount a winning campaign.

If the Ford-Dole ticket has not predetermined the election, it has certainly driven home the ideological difference between the candidates and the two principal political parties for anyone who was unaware of the respective party platforms. Allowing for generalizations, it is the difference between a political philosophy that, on the one hand, is avowedly conservative, almost in the McKinley sense; that is big-business reliant, militarily chauvinistic, and pandering to reactionary instincts, as on school prayer and women's rights—and, on the other hand, a political philosophy that sees government as an active, progressive instrument in coping with social and humanitarian challenges, that is aware of the age in which it finds itself, and that is sufficiently sensitive to at least question spending priorities, as for the military, so the country might think more realistically about better health plans, better educational systems, better housing, a better environment. If ever the two-party system offered Americans a clear choice, and what the choice should be, it is this presidential year.

To presume, however, that the contest is over but for the formality of the balloting is reckless. Much can happen between now and November 2. The power of the incumbency is forever awesome, even in the hands of one so ordinarily inept as Gerald Ford. In addition, the Democrats can rely on Robert Dole to be the aggressive, efficient gut-fighter of his reputation. The opinion polls, which recently showed the widest gap in history

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favoring challenger over presidential incumbent, have already begun to narrow now that Ford has settled his Reagan "problem"—the bid for the nomination, if no other—and can campaign head-on against Carter. It will close further, and could reduce to a tiltable few points by election day. The Democrats, in a word, must guard against overconfidence born of their present lead.

In this context, the campaign that Carter conducts will be interesting to watch. In the primaries, the Carter tactic—on occasion, at least—was to merely shade the ideological distance between himself and his principal opponent and thus extend potential appeal over the widest ground possible. The procedure worked magically, while producing some inevitable confusion on where precisely he stood on certain issues. The August 24 speech before the American Legion convention in Seattle, a masterpiece of forthrightness, would appear to indicate that there will be less of this shading tactic in the contest against Ford, and that is welcome. We certainly do not wish Carter to commit political harakiri, as George McGovern did in 1972. At the same time, we are not anxious to see the party platform slivered by ideological opportunism.

One protection against this occurring would seem to be the television debates between the candidates—providing, of course, legislative and other problems are worked out so they can indeed take place. But television debates are not foolproof means for confrontation, and if the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates have any lesson for history, it is that optimism should be kept measured over them as vehicle. The better candidate won the 1960 debates, for certain. But the fact remains that the outcome was settled less on contents than by cosmetics and camera presence. There is probably small chance of the same thing happening again, or so we like to think. Yet there is no guarantee that the debates will not be turned into some kind of perverse forum by the participants; and no guarantee either that the maximum number of urgent issues will be raised and grappled with in a substantive way.

For some of these reasons, we would like to see Eugene McCarthy included in the arrangements. McCarthy's independent candidacy may appear to some as quixotic. But so also did his run at Lyndon Johnson in 1968, until it set American history on a new course. The point is, as Eugene McCarthy was a positive political force then, so could he be useful catalyst now by adding insurance that topics are not ducked in the debates, and that questions raised will be meaningfully discussed. McCarthy has the head, wit and political intelligence for effective participation.

Of course, neither Republicans nor Democrats want him included. But Federal Election Commission rules make provision for independents. And with a claim on 5 to 15 percent of the vote, McCarthy belongs in the debates. For the country's sake, we hope he makes it.

WASHINGTON REPORT

ON PARDON AND THE DOLE

In the newsroom where I work there was no particular surprise at Ford's choice of Dole as his running mate: hack calls out to hack across the void, after all. What did cause general consternation, however, were the assurances, pouring out of all three networks, that Dole was a famous wit, known for his snappy comebacks and one-line zingers, the Mort Sahl of the heartland right wing.

Dole funny? asked a producer. Sure, said a reporter, don't you remember? He said Nixon was innocent.

That was a funny line all right, and Dole, like Ford, said it again and again that memorable summer two years ago, until he'd squeezed out all the laughs and it stopped being all that funny.

It is that history of Dole as last ditch, hard line, stone-waller for the Nixon gang, rather than his abilities as a stand-up comic or his equally legendary style as a thumb-in-the-eye, knee-in-the-crotch campaigner, that makes his appointment by Ford peculiarly satisfying from both an aesthetic and a mythic point of view.

Aesthetically, Dole completes and strengthens the circle that would have been weakened and left open by Reagan, blurred and broken by Howard Baker, not to mention Lowell Weicker, whom, to be sure, no one did. Besides having a name too easily confused with Schweiker, Weicker, like Baker, was on the wrong side in Watergate: he wanted to find out the truth. With Dole on the ticket, the Ford campaign is now manifestly the continuation of the Nixon defense and aggrandizement the Ford administration has been.

The Pardon really is an issue in this election and will possibly be the determining one. This is too bad, in a way—so many other things being so much more important in the day-to-day future of the country; yet the American people who have chosen The Pardon as an issue know well, if perhaps obscurely, what they are doing. The Pardoner's Tale—that he was doing it for the sake of the country—has not gone down with the country: that's why Ronald Reagan was able to come so close to taking the nomination of his party away from an incumbent President whose views, after all, are really much the same as Reagan's, though usually expressed in the protective fuzz picked up over the years of House politics as obfuscation.

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This is where we get into myth. For once it is classical myth, instead of the more customary home-made myths of The Frontier, Yankee Ingenuity, Southern Cavaliers and Luck-and-Pluck Free Enterprise. Way back there in the Sacred Grove, under the Golden Bough, the king commits his crime, unnatural, incestuous, patricidal crime preferred, and the king must die. Nixon, in fact, committed precisely that awe-striking mythic crime, forcible incest upon our Great Mother, the Constitution, patricide against the Father of the Fatherland, the Government of Laws.

Since in Nixon's original choice of Vice-President, crook had called out to crook across the void, it became necessary to bring in a substitute and successor. Jerry Ford arrived on the scene in yet another familiar role from beneath the Golden Bough: The Temporary King. In the myth, The Temporary King enjoys all the privileges and perquisites of kingship for a magical period—a year and a day is popular; then he's put to death, at once cleansing the Folk of crime and sparing the real king from undertaking that sacrifice himself.

As Temporary King, Ford had the chance to be real king, but he blew it out of misplaced loyalty to the patricide and incestuous rapist of San Clemente. Worse still, Ford had merely to do nothing to have qualified as real king. Instead, before his formal accession, while Nixon was still nominally the real king and Al Haig, perfidious Pentagonian, was Mayor of the Palace, Ford took to the hustings in support of a palpable lie, that Nixon was innocent. Worst of all and absolutely ensuring that he would play The Temporary King all the way to repudiation and ritual execution by the Folk, Ford pardoned the criminal king in a magical time period of our own, 30 days, as in Payment Due in 30 Days.

The phrase suggests a deal. Was there one? Barring an honest memoir by Haig, a distinct improbability, we shall never know. Actually, it's irrelevant. A military politician as practiced and successful as Haig would certainly arrange any such prior agreement so that The Temporary King had no scrap of paper, no tape casette of record in his possession, that any such record was in the control of the Mayor of the Palace to be used for enforcement of the Delivery in 30 Days. More likely, there would be no record at all, the merely implied threat of undocumented disclosure being leverage enough for enforcement if things came to that. More likely still, no overt agreement, written or oral, would have been needed. You don't survive in the House power structure as long as Ford did, you don't flourish in military politics as brilliantly as Haig has, without learning to understand a lot of things, especially slightly shady things, without having to speak them or hear them. The question of a deal is irrelevant finally because there obviously was a deal whether there was a deal or not.

After his first big act, The Pardon, The Temporary King continued on the true, Nixonian course. The route markings are everywhere: most of the Nixonians who didn't go to jail, for example, either stayed in their jobs or got promoted. The most spectacular promotion was reserved for the Mayor of the Palace who had arranged the transition and the deal or non-deal that brought The Temporary King to power or at least to the appearence of power. Haig, whose last active military command had been as a field-grade officer, became Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Robert Dole, as a vigorous defender of The Criminal King, fits into the pattern solidly established by The Temporary King, quite possibly outlined in advance and recalled from time to time by the Mayor of the Palace, even by The Criminal King, whose taxes remain unpaid and whose every wish or comfort has been assiduously attended to by The Temporary King.

Ritual atonement is what goes on in the Sacred Grove, beneath the Golden Bough. The order of nature in our Republic was deeply violated by The Criminal King. To put it right, so that all things might be whole again, required the ritual sacrifice of the criminal. The ceremonies of that sacrifice, ordinary and extraordinary, were in their stately motion toward that end when, abruptly, with no acknowledged consultation outside the old gang, The Temporary King dismantled the machinery, halted the progress, decreed the crime would never be atoned, the balance of nature never restored.

Against this, the Folk have taken two recourses. The first failed at Kansas City, in part because of its unlikely embodiment in Reagan. The second gathers its strength in Plains, Ga., no less unlikely, perhaps, but with fair promise of success. The Folk will be cleansed, The Temporary King destroyed by his own choice in reparation for the unnatural crimes of his creator.

In the meantime, it is worth remembering that The Temporary King serves another purpose as well. Though not of the royal blood that is acquired in the very processes of presidential politics, as it was acquired by Nixon, in however tainted proportions, though not come to his high office by the ritual trials of endurance and cleverness, The Temporary King enjoys all the privileges and perquisites such blooded and trial-proven champions enjoy. In so doing, he acts for all of us. In his person, we, too, fly about the country in Air Force One, visit holiday resorts on whim, hop over city traffic in magical helicopters, command the performances of leading artistes in our living rooms, savoring it all a little more from the knowledge that it is free, we have all this with neither qualification nor exertion.

This undeserved bounty poured upon mediocrity, common enough in monarchies, is rare in republics. The spectacle has been good for us, but we cannot afford it indefinitely. Beneath the Golden Bough, the altar and the blade await November. FRANK GETLEIN

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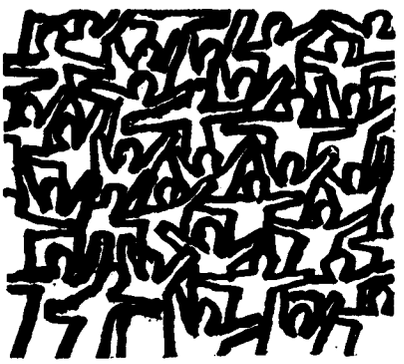
COMPULSORY STERILIZATION IN INDIA

DONALD P. WARWICK



The resort to coercion raises civil and moral issues

For over twenty years India has been the world's proving ground for public birth control programs. After a cautious start in the 1950s, when technology was scant and political reticence abundant, the government moved into high gear around 1965. Since then it has lurched from one family-planning strategy to the next: massive promotion of the intra-uterine device; posters, broadcasts, puppet shows and other informational campaigns; incentives to acceptors and bounties to finders; condom distribution schemes; integrated health and family planning services; and, in the early 1970s, huge sterilization "festivals" leading to tens of thousands of vasectomies and tubectomies. The results have been meager. While the birth rate is falling slowly, after twenty-four years of government programs no more than 17 percent of couples in the reproductive ages use contraceptive devices.

Faced with a current population of over 600 million and the prospect of hitting one billion by 1990, India has now decided to take more strenuous steps. In recent months coercive population control measures proposed by state governments have ricocheted off Draconian edicts from New Delhi. The state of Maharahstra, which includes populous Bombay, has passed a bill making sterilization mandatory for one partner when couples have three or more children. Those who refuse face stiff fines and prison terms of up to six months. Both West Bengal and Punjab are drafting similar legislation. If implemented, these will be the world's first known across-the-board compulsory sterilization programs. The federal government has given its tacit approval to these measures, and has taken less drastic steps on its own. In April it raised the minimum age of marriage from 15 to 18 for women and from 18 to 21 for men. Earlier it cut off most government assistance, from jobs to housing, schools and medical benefits, for federal employees and Delhi residents with more than two children. Price Minister Indira Gandhi speaks bluntly of "other strong steps which may not be liked by all."

India's resort to coercion sharply raises the question of government rights vs. human rights. The moral issues posed by these initiatives are doubly important because of India's size and fishbowl status in the world communtiy. If the government moves ahead with these programs and—a much bigger if—manages to lower the birth rate, other large nations, such as Pakistan and Indonesia, may be tempted to follow its lead. It thus seems crucial at this time to examine the ethics of compulsory population control.

Two ethical approaches should be scuttled from the outset. The first is the position that, because India's population problem is so grave and its success with voluntary programs so dismal, the government is fully justified in taking any action necessary to bring down fertility. This argument begs the question of what exactly constitutes the country's population "problem," and also negates the possibility of universal and inviolable human rights. Editorial comment to date on the Indian proposals shows a curious double standard. Writers who are quick to cite United Nations declarations in condemning violations of political freedom in Chile and elsewhere seem quite content to overlook the same declarations when it comes to population control in India.

A second easy escape, on the other hand, is to invoke

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human rights principles, but fail to relate them to the difficulties posed by rapid population growth. The resolutions of the World Population Conference at Bucharest, to which India was a signatory, explicitly state that national population policies should be formulated and implemented "without violating, and with due promotion of, universally accepted standards of human rights." No UN document, however, states the conditions (if any) under which the right to procreate may have to be sacrificed for the common good. Yet in the judgment of its political leaders this is precisely the dilemma facing India. Mrs. Gandhi has said: "Some personal rights have to be kept in abeyance for the human rights of the nation —the right to live and the right to progress."

Under a broader set of ethical criteria coercion might be justified if all of the following conditions were met: (1) population growth could be shown to present a clear danger to the common good; (2) non-coercive methods have been tried and have failed; (3) compulsion can reasonably be expected to produce the desired reduction in fertility; and (4) program implementation would be equitable across all castes and classes, and would produce more good than harm. Even measured against these standards, which strong human rights advocates would consider too loose, the Indian proposals do not fare very well.

Is population growth a real threat to India's welfare? Few would deny that under existing conditions rapidly increasing numbers severely strain the country's ability to provide food, clothing, shelter, education and other services to its people. But the reasons include not only mounting demands from a burgeoning population, but also the government's notorious failure in achieving national development. India has a very poor record in promoting rural development, land and income distribution, reduced infant mortality, and other forms of material welfare. Its "population problem," therefore, might be summarized as: growing numbers + governmental ineffectiveness. To single out the first component for coercive action without taking equally drastic steps to improve the second seems a classic case of blaming the victim.

In essence, the government is saying that its "problem" is the irresponsible breeding habits of the poor, rather than its own failure to offer people a better life. Some would turn the argument around. To the extent that people have children because they are poor, which seems to be the case, the "population problem" lies in social injustice and the other causes of poverty. By this logic the greatest problem, and thus the prime target for concerted action, should be poverty, not fertility. To the extent that coercive measures divert attention and resources from that objective, they would be misplaced.

Has India really given non-coercive measures a fair chance? In one sense the Family Planning Programme has already tried everything short of compulsion—voluntary clinics, public exhortation, mobile units, incentives, and mass vasectomy camps. Nothing seems to have had much of an effect on the birth rate. Yet even now basic family planning services are not available to large segments of the population, particularly in rural areas. And where they are available clinic administration is often so insensitive and incompetent that potential users stay away. It would be a considerable exaggeration to say that voluntary family planning has been tried and has failed.

Still, both advocates and critics of coercion would probably agree on one point: the main reason for the limited success of family planning is not the lack of service facilities but the absence of motivation. For many millions of Indians the idea of having only two or three children simply does not make sense. The reasons are legion: high infant mortality, which means that only one of three may survive; cultural preferences for a surviving son; the need for more children to work the land or to supplement the family income with employment elsewhere; having someone to take care of parents in their old age, and so on. Mahmood Mamdani's small study *The Myth of Population Control* gives eloquent testimony to the rationality of large families for Indian villagers.

The major non-coercive method which has not been seriously tried is a fundamental attack on the conditions of life now favoring high fertility, in other words, national development. Where development programs or the "green revolution" have produced tangible results, and where villagers find that improved conditions reduce the need for children, fertility often does drop. But those situations have been few in India.

Significantly, the government has not applied in the development field the drastic measures it proposes for population. It has not launched a large-scale, radical land reform effort, a crash program to increase agricultural productivity for the poorest, or dramatic action to break the grip of the landowners. Yet such programs might ultimately have a greater impact on fertility than the direct attacks outlined in recent legislation. At the very least, one could argue that the government should take no more forceful actions against the symptom of high fertility than it does against its underlying social causes.

Will a coercive program succeed if it is implemented? Someone has said that any government which can mount a gargantuan apparatus of compulsion probably does not need it. Nations able to produce such a managerial feat are usually in the middle to upper reaches of development, possessing social conditions which themselves lead to reduced fertility. India, by contrast, does not have even an adequate system of birth and death registration in its poorest areas. It is hard to imagine how a government which cannot manage simple vital statistics

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will be able to determine the age of couples and the number of their children and then organize an effective enforcement mechanism.

The few reliable studies done on the government's existing family planning program provide little basis for optimism. One of the best is Robert E. Elder's *Development Administration in a North Indian State: the Family Planning Program in Uttar Pradesh*. Using a variety of research techniques, Elder patiently and objectively documents the mismanagement and corruption, as well as the negative attitudes of villagers, seen in the Uttar Pradesh case. This and other studies point up the pivotal role of program workers. When they do not believe in what they are doing, or are placed under pressure to meet quotas of acceptors, their ingenuity at evasion and falsification knows no bounds. In view of the horrors that compulsory sterilization might create for hunter and hunted alike, the prognosis for employee motivation is abysmal. As a rule of thumb, if a government cannot organize itself for activities widely perceived to be in the people's interest, it is unlikely to do so for programs that are roundly detested.

What will happen if the government does try to enforce compulsory sterilization? If earlier sterilization campaigns are any indication, the scalpel will fall disproportionately on the weakest members of society—the untouchables, the poor and the illiterate. To achieve results and to counteract built-in employee resistance, the government will probably assign quotas to each worker. Enticed by the lure of per capita rewards, or intimidated by the threat of losing their jobs, the workers will naturally seek the path of least resistance. Not only will the upper and middle classes be in a better position to pay bribes and pull strings to save their reproductive apparatus, but they will be better armed through education and experience to take evasive action against the sterilization squad. Frustrated by the obstacles encountered in the higher strata, field workers will turn to less protected terrain.

Elder's study provides vivid documentation of this descent upon the weak. For example, although the scheduled castes (formerly untouchables) made up only 29 percent of Uttar Pradesh, they accounted for 49 percent of the "voluntary" vasectomies. One reason was undoubtedly the greater attractiveness of financial incentives to the poor. But there was also compelling evidence that public officials used pressure and intimidation with this group to fill their quotas. Such selective application of sterilization not only creates grave injustices for the individuals affected, but could have quasi-genocidal implications for the scheduled cases. In short, on the basis of past performance there is every reason to expect that the implementation of compulsory programs will be far from equitable.

Other moral questions also arise. Is it fair, for instance, to apply coercion across-the-board without regards for prevailing conditions of health and mortality? Even if one allows the need for compulsion, it seems egregiously unfair to apply the same standard in areas where more than half of the children die as in those where most will live. Even in India there are vast differences in infant mortality across states and between urban and rural areas. And what about forced sterilization in regions lacking voluntary family planning services? Surely equity demands that couples be given the opportunity for contraception before one partner is marched off for sterilization. Also morally significant is the sex distribution of the living children. In Indian culture it would be a double penalty to sterilize a parent when all children were of the same sex, especially if there were no son. Male descendants remain important not only to prove virility, but also for their central role in the Hindu burial ceremony for the father. To date these questions have been shunted aside in the frenzied race for tough legislation.

The shift to coercion may entail other costs as well. To execute a large-scale compulsory sterilization program the government will have to divert medical personnel and funds from existing health and family planning services. The health centers, already seriously understaffed and simply non-existent in some areas, would then have to curtail maternal and child health care, tuberculosis control, immunizations and other forms of preventive medicine. Given persuasive evidence that reduced infant mortality and improved maternal health facilitate a drop in fertility, such cutbacks would seem both morally and practically dubious. Further, the introduction of coercion might well contaminate voluntary family planning efforts. Beyond the rampant rumors which are inevitable in such a program and which cropped up in earlier vasectomy campaigns, poor people may understandably find it hard to distinguish Monday's coercive horrors from Tuesday's voluntary services in the same clinic. Should the government later decide to abandon compulsion, it may find it difficult to dispel resident demons from the premises.

We must certainly sympathize with India's dilemmas in matching resources and services to people. Few governments in history have had to face such overwhelming demands at the same time that internal conditions and the world market have severely constrained the possibilities for action. But even this desperate situation does not, on its face, morally justify a compulsory population control program. It is by no means evident that the recent proposals address India's most basic population problem, nor that voluntary measures, including development programs, have been given a fair chance, nor that the program would work on its own terms or be administered equitably.

The ultimate tragedy of the Indian proposals is not that they are an exercise in futility, but that they are a gesture of despair. In a country already shot through

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with resignation, indifference and dejection, a further dose of oppression seems particularly ill-timed. People are being told that there is no hope, that the government cannot promise a better life for themselves and their children, and that, indeed, the begetting of children—one of the few areas of accomplishment for the poor—is a prime source of despair.

Strong-arm methods may be effective in stifling political opposition, but they stand little chance of bringing down the birth rate. A former top official in the Indian family planning program told me not long ago that in his view the solution to the country's population program was ultimately cultural—a new set of symbols, a new moral vision. He felt that development was, of course, important, but that what Indians needed even more was a new leader to walk the length of the land preaching hope and change. Such remarks may seem visionary and characteristically Indian, but coming from someone who has tried the route of gadgetry they deserve to be heeded. Perhaps this what Shakesepare meant when he wrote: "The miserable have no other medicine but only hope."

CATHOLICS AND THE E.R.A.

ARLENE SWIDLER

Catholic opposition is intense and organized

The defeats of the Equal Rights Amendments to the state constitutions of New York and New Jersey—in the heart of progressive feminist territory—in November of 1975 apparently came as a surprise to almost everyone. Among the optimistic proponents of the ERA to the federal constitution there had been a feeling that once Congress had passed the bill it was merely a matter of time until the fifty-odd year battle was won. To have state ERAs defeated later, and especially in the Northeast and by the voters themselves rather than merely their largely male representatives, was something of a shock.

In the following weeks feminists went back over their strategies in periodicals like *Ms.* and *Majority Report*. One of the conclusions that emerged was that Catholic opposition was more intense and more organized than feminists had recognized.

The New York state Knights of Columbus group, 127,000 strong, was reported to have distributed several hundred thousand pieces of anti-ERA material asserting that the ERA would promote abortion and weaken the position of women and the family. Catholic columnists like Joseph Breig denounced the ERA in diocesan newspapers, priests preached against it, Holy Name societies opposed it, and Catholic schools and churches distributed material against it. The Catholic vote, according to one feminist analyst, was especially strong in New York state because the right-to-gambling law on the ballot, important to parish finances, brought the Catholics out to the polls. In New Jersey, where the state ERA unexpectedly found voter support in the generally conservative part of the state, Msgr. Salvatore Adamo, the editor of the Catholic Camden *Star-Herald,* could see no reason for the deviation from the usual conservative pattern except for the pro-ERA stand of his diocesan newspaper.

The overall impression among ERA workers seems to be that the Catholic Church has been mobilized by the abortion issue, an issue which most constitutional authorities state is irrelevant to the Equal Rights Amendment. The conjecture of such historians of the first great feminist battle as Eleanor Flexner that the birth-control issue may have influenced the Church to oppose women's suffrage fits the same pattern.

The Catholic position, however, is much older than the recent abortion struggle, and much more complicated. Its rationale, in fact, is capsulized in a document that pre-dates the first introduction of the ERA into the Congressional debate by several years.

In 1919 the National Catholic War Council—soon to become the National Catholic Welfare Conference—issued a "Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction," a document so advanced for its day that it was denounced by the president of the National Association of Manufacturers as "partisan, pro-labor union, socialistic propaganda." The "Program," signed by the Administrative Committee of the NCWC, is important not only because of its great merit and foresight, but because, coming as it did just a few months before the formation of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the beginnings of a permanent staff for the American Catholic Church, it pointed the future direction; equally important, its sole author was Father John A. Ryan, who one year later would become the first head of the

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Social Welfare Department of the NCWC and remain in that position until 1945.

Ryan had finished his doctorate at the Catholic University of America in 1906 with a thesis on *A Living Wage,* probably the most important and most influential economic study to emerge from American Catholicism. He had then taught for some years in the St. Paul Seminary in his native Minnesota before being called to teach at Catholic University. Throughout his life he published profusely and fought politically for his goals, one of which was the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment bill.

In this 1919 "Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction," the bishops, adopting Ryan's draft, devoted one section, titled "Women War Workers," to the problem of the large number of women who had replaced the men in industry during the war years. Their first general principle was that "No female worker should remain in any occupation that is harmful to health or morals." Among these were included such tasks as conducting street cars and cleaning locomotives.

Another "General principle" was that the proportion of women in industry should be kept as small as practical, the displaced female workers finding suitable work in other areas or in domestic occupations. Then, having to some extent limited women to less lucrative areas of the labor market, this section concluded that those women doing the same work as men should receive equal pay for equal work. In a series of lectures on the "Bishops' Program" at Fordham University the following winter, Ryan acknowledged that this proposed limitation on women had probably "displeased" many people, but, he argued, it followed from a view of the "function of women in life according to traditional Catholic teaching and according to sound social doctrine."

In another section, "The Legal Minimum Wage," the bishops urged state legislation of wage rates guaranteeing a decent family maintenance in the case of all male adults and decent individual support for female workers.

That the bishops took the problems of women workers with some seriousness is indicated by an announcement that same year that the NCWC was offering "advice, information and assistance" to, among other groups, any organization developing short vocational courses for women.

The development of the Living Wage concept was Ryan's greatest contribution to American thought. The concept had first been proposed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of 1891, but it was only in 1894, when Ryan was well into his seminary studies, that he first came upon it. Ryan, however, carried the idea beyond Leo's formulations. Leo had said that "the remuneration of the worker should be sufficient to enable him to live in reasonable and frugal comfort," but Ryan advocated a Family Living Wage. This Family Living Wage could be defined with some precision: enough to support a wife and four or five children until they reached the age of sixteen, though, Ryan felt, it would be better if that age could be extended to twenty-one, so that the boys would have greater opportunities for education and training, and the girls "would necessarily be better equipped for and more willing to accept woman's true functions." Such a family required, for example, a house with three bedrooms—one for the parents, one for the male children, and one for the daughters.

In 1916 Ryan wrote of the adult male, "His right to this amount of remuneration is directly based neither upon the needs nor the rights of his family, but upon his own needs, upon the fact that family conditions are indispensable to his own normal life." In his thesis he had presented the same idea:

> The right to the means of maintaining a family, therefore, is not finally derived from the duty of maintaining it—from the needs of the family—but from the laborer's dignity, from his own essential needs. . . . The right to the conditions of being the head of a family, which is obvious, implies the right to a family Living Wage, because nature and reason have decreed that the family should be supported by its head.

In more cynical terms, he who wants to call the patriarchal tune must pay the bills. It is noteworthy that Ryan denies that a dependent wife has a direct claim in justice to the necessities of life. The concept of housewife as productive laborer, of course, does not enter into his system.

But what of the other categories? Unmarried adult males would have to be paid the same as family men, according to Ryan, partly on the assumption that they would later marry, and partly because if they were paid less they would obviously be more likely to get whatever jobs were available. Women with dependents, on the other hand, ought not be paid a family living wage. The Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor had said that a woman's living wage should be based on the needs of both herself and any dependents, but Ryan disagreed. General standards should not be based on an "abnormal situation," he argued; it is clearly impossible to pay each woman according to her individual situation, and to pay all women a family living wage would be to "overturn the normal relation."

Ryan's sharp analysis of the social and economic facts of his day clearly did not extend to questioning the patriarchal structure. His autobiography shows little interest in women, either in the concrete or abstract, though slightly more interest in contraception, in which argument he quotes Tertullian. Although in 1919 he claimed to have argued in favor of woman suffrage as "reasonable and expedient" in a class assignment some twenty-five years before, and although he favored equal-

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ity of legal rights for women in matters concerning children, property, and residence, a reading of his opinions on women—and this is pretty well true of all statements coming from national Catholic offices of that day—shows a concern primarily for the family, with the assumption that the patriarchal family style is natural, proper, and in the woman's best interest. A pamphlet issued from his office in 1938 listed one of the benefits of the family living wage as "earlier marriages and more of them."

He also spoke for, and worked for, a reasonable personal living wage for working women. It is true that he admitted that women must be paid equal wages for equal work only because to pay them less would encourage employers to hire women rather than men, and then urged that women be kept out of the lucrative industrial positions. But, unlike many of his contemporaries, he believed that a proper wage for a woman must assume that she will live alone, not within her father's—or someone else's—house. Back in 1913, before Ryan came to Washington to teach at Catholic University, he had chaired the first Minnesota advisory committee on a minimum wage for women. Ryan's position was that women should receive a wage based on the assumption that the woman lived in a home of her own, rather than with a family. But the working women who represented the employees on the advisory committee were far too naive and impressionable. As Ryan's biographer, Francis L. Broderick, tells us, Ryan discovered that it was the middle-class reformers, the "club women," who could be relied on to insist on decent minimums for their working sisters.

That lesson was apparently lost on John A. Ryan, for he often afterwards used divisive class arguments of the type still heard today to discredit the middle-class women of the feminist movement, despite the fact that he well understood that poor tired working women could not be expected to do their own organizing.

On one occasion he related the "amusing" time that a representative of the Woman's Party, a member of the comfortable class, came to speak at a Women's Industrial Conference directly from a dinner party, "arrayed from top to toe in resplendent evening garments." On another occasion, although he approved of woman suffrage, he wrote that "Most of the leaders are exceptional rather than typical. . . . Their ideas and psychology are remote from the mental habits and attitudes of the majority of women." And in 1927 he suggested that the Woman's Party members probably didn't care much what happened to their laboring sisters. The difference, of course, between the life style and intellectual habits of the male factory workers and those of their champion John A. Ryan was never adverted to.

Actually women seem usually to have overcome their divisions and worked together across class lines better than their male counterparts. When the Wisconsin Equal Rights Amendment was passed in 1921—the first of its kind—it was backed by, among other groups, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Polish Housewives League. More significantly, the first three presidents of the Women's Trade Union League, which organized strikers and raised bail and strike funds, were women of independent means who devoted their time and energies to helping less fortunate women.

The place where laboring women most needed solidarity, however, was among themselves in the labor unions. Unfortunately this kind of sisterhood has never been achieved, and it is the chief reason why Ryan and his colleagues and subordinates in the NCWC believed in the necessity of protective legislation and thus of the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Women had a long union history by the time in which Ryan worked. For decades they had been members of the regular national trade unions, beginning with their admittance to the cigarmakers' union in 1867 and the printers' in 1869, and the Knights of Labor had begun admitting women on an equal basis in 1881. Women had also begun in the 1860s to organize into their independent unions for particular industries and into the more general Working Women's Association. In 1909 large numbers of women in the clothing industry—estimates go as high as 30,000—called their first large general strike, showing more gumption than was expected of them.

Yet then as now, women never were able to achieve the powerful organization that their male counterparts did. One reason is certainly that they were less educated, less skilled and thus far more vulnerable than their male colleagues. Another was their reluctance to break through the barriers of femininity imposed on them by society; a Mrs. Barry organizing for the Knights of Labor complained of the "prudish modesty and religious scruples" which deterred the submissive ladies from joining the Union.

The reason which tended to be stressed by the Catholic anti-ERA forces was that women, forced into the job market against their will and nature, saw it only as an interim occupation and had no interest in putting

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their energies into organizing. Women belonged in the home and were happiest in the home. Already in 1909 Ryan had taken the position in his "Programme of Social Reform by Legislation" that except in cases of great financial hardship married women ought not be permitted to become wage earners. Over the years he and members of his staff talked about the "enforced migration" of women from the home to the factory, wives being "compelled" to work, women "forced" to provide their own sustenance. One staff member said that "The average girl regards industry merely as a stopping place between school and marriage. . . ."

From this it followed that women were usually not to be thought of as permanent members of the labor force, and that as transients they neither could nor would take a serious interest in organizing themselves. The resulting lack of clout made protective legislation necessary. Undoubtedly the two factors tended to reinforce one another: treated badly in the labor force, women were eager to retire, and knowing that they would leave as soon as they could find a man to provide for them, they neglected to turn political. It is typical that Mother Jones, a Catholic and the foremost woman labor organizer in this country, always believed that woman should be free to remain in the home.

Today of course we question whether uniform legislation for men and women might not be the best solution. Ryan would have had several objections. First, he did not want women and men earning the same wage—one was a family bread-winner, the other, at least in theory, was not. He also stressed on a number of occasions that working men did not want legislation on such matters as a minimum wage: they felt that they could do much better for themselves by working through their unions. Behind this attitude was the fear that a legal minimum might be seized upon by an employer as a fair wage and thus become at the same time the maximum wage. Ryan himself pointed out that this was not a probable result. The first minimum wage law, in Victoria, Australia, had proved that wages were still a negotiable matter as well as that prices would not immediately rise and cancel out the advantage of the raise. Yet the working men themselves had doubts.

The only solution to the pitifully small wages and the horrible working conditions of women in the early part of the century was protective legislation. Ryan himself had worked hard in his appointment to the Minnesota commission on minimum wage standards. It was a Catholic priest and a Catholic laywoman who led the fight in Oregon for the first protective laws in this country with any teeth in them; the laywoman later entered the convent and, as Sister Miriam Teresa Gleason, earned her doctorate at Catholic University with a thesis on "Legislation for Women in Oregon," written under Prof. Ryan. Gleason saw her work as an attempt to save the women of the West from the evils of the industrial East by safeguarding them "from the greed and the passion of men." The feminists of 1976 who lash out against the whole idea of protective legislation without taking into account the great amounts of time, energy and emotion that socially-conscious women and men poured into these legal battles when they were the only hope for the poor and downtrodden unfortunately endanger the unity of the women's movement with their oversimplifications.

On the other hand, there seems never to have been a concerted effort by the Church to work with women unionists. The importance of unionizing women was recognized; a pamphlet put out in 1938 by Ryan's Social Action Department of the NCWC (*Women in Industry*) touches on the question several times. Because women work only because they must, the pamphlet says, and because they hope to leave the labor force, they are not interested in preparing themselves for skilled positions, and industry takes advantage of them. "To right the special difficulties of women at their work is a spiritual and corporal work of mercy," the book contends. "The necessity for union membership applied to women as well as men. . . ." Technical training, encouragement for women in labor unions, voting for laws to protect women: all these are advocated, but apparently the Church neither sent people out to work with women laborers the way priests worked with men nor lectured the male unionists on the rights of their female colleagues. Rather there was an assumption and a hope that the situation would soon be so changed that women would no longer be working outside the home. *Women in Industry* observed that if men made a living wage, few wives would work.

A Threat

Thus, for a variety of reasons, all of them centering on the traditional view of the family, the Equal Rights Amendment represented a threat to Catholics like John A. Ryan. The Catholic Church of course was not alone in opposing the National Woman's Party and the ERA. The Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, the League of Women Voters, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the General Federation of Women's Clubs all came to support the ERA only as the years went by. Even Leo Kanowitz, the author of the first textbook on women and the law, was urging women in 1969 not to waste time on working for the ERA instead of focusing on specific problems of inequality.

The Catholic Church, however, is probably the largest —and, since last November, perhaps the most feared— opponent. The more vocal opposition has come from the National Council of Catholic Women, and it is the women's council which is more often and more bitterly attacked by the ERA proponents.

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The women's official stand against the ERA seems to have begun in 1924, when the annual convention passed a resolution "protesting against the passage of the so-called Equal Rights Blanket Amendment because of the jeopardy in which it places the interests of women, and directing that representatives in Congress be informed of this protest." Earlier that same year Father John J. Burke, C.S.P., the executive head of the entire NCWC staff, had addressed the New York archdiocesan women's council on the dangers of the bill, "that will practically sanction the separation of husband and wife, separate father and mother and children, and do away with all of the progressive legislation that has been enacted for the welfare and care of women and girls in industry." Over the years we find Ryan talking to the Catholic women's annual convention about the National Woman's Party in 1929, and Linna E. Bresette representing both the women's council and the Social Action Department in testimony before the 1944 Resolutions and platform Committee of the Democratic Party against the inclusion of a plank favoring an ERA. In addition we have the word of the women's president in 1923 that cooperation with other groups would never be given "unless it be in line with the general directions of the National Catholic Welfare Conference." It is clear that the National Council of Catholic Women, as a mandated organization, has relied heavily on the advice and counsel of the NCWC, now the USCC.

Unfortunately that advice has not always been based on a solid analysis of the facts. As late as 1945 the NCWC publication *Social Action* printed an article by George E. Reed of the Social Action Department on "Spurious Equality," in which the final and culminating argument against the Equal Rights Amendment begins with a long quotation from Pius XI:

> The false liberty and unnatural equality with the husband is to the detriment of the woman herself for if the woman descends from her truly regal throne to which she has been raised within the walls of the home by means of the Gospel, she will soon be reduced to the old state of slavery and become as among the pagans the mere instrument of man. . . .

Reed's commentary begins, "Observe the emphasis on the dignity of woman."

It must be added that quite often a testy tone of male chauvinism is audible. Ryan, for example, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on the ERA in 1938 by describing the feminist movement in fairly realistic terms: the leaders, he said, resent the male sex, "they believe that men have forced women into an inferior social position and an inferior position in all important departments of life. . . . They hate the kind of world in which they find themselves because it seems to be entirely a 'man's world'." He then concluded that feminism is female anarchism, and like all anarchism, "it is incompatible with social order, social welfare, or social progress." Ryan apparently liked this phraseology; this is neither the first nor the last time it appears.

It has been a good many years now since John A. Ryan left the helm of the Social Action Department. There has been another war to adjust to since the 1919 statement. There are new judicial traditions to take into consideration. Despite his unthinking acceptance of some of the prejudices and situations of his day, Ryan was basically a social scientist. If he did not rely on women's unionizing themselves, it was because he knew empirically that they did not. If he urged protective legislation, it was because the women he saw had no other defense. Would he find the facts any different today?

First, the fervent hope of Ryan and his male colleagues that women were mere transients in the labor force could no longer be sustained. Women are now prepared to seek jobs with skills equal to men's, and are gradually beginning to be taken as seriously by employers. The law is on their side. Ryan could not say today as he did in 1927:

> These women (of the National Woman's Party) seem to think that they are restrained by the law from entering executive positions in industry and the profitable places generally. With equal lack of clearness and logic, they seem to indulge the hope that this sort of discrimination would be prevented by their equal rights amendment to the Constitution. Of course there is no substance whatever in either of these contentions.

Secondly, society itself has moved far along the road toward justice since the day when Ryan and his colleagues fought so hard for the protective legislation which helped to make life bearable for the poverty-level woman. Beyond that, the new women's movement has shown the broad ramifications of the feminist quest. Although Ryan may have been right in saying that, "If women are to compete with men on equal terms in all departments of life, they will have to abide by the rules of the game," he misjudged the future when he continued, "Now all experience and all the pertinent facts point to the conclusion that the rules of the game will continue to be made by men." We have come a long way since then.

The patriarchal ideal of every married woman removed from the labor market, the failure of women to prepare themselves with marketable skills, the belief that it is the highly unusual woman who has a family to support, the exclusion of women's concerns from labor unions' agenda, the unconditional desire for progeny: all of these are rapidly becoming things of the past, and with them the traditional Catholic bases for opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment.

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NOT-SO-SILENT JOURNALISTS

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

A few surprises in Eastern Europe

Western journalists preen themselves on their intrepidity and outspokenness. Even if there is a good deal of cant in this self-image and if countless time-servers hang on the coattails of greater men, there is nevertheless a tradition of courageous nonconformity and a willingness to ask tough questions. In Eastern Europe the role of the journalist is at first glance wholly different. Khrushchev defined journalists as "the first officers of public opinion" and Brezhnev lauded them as "precious instruments of the Party." It is the sort of praise that smothers and pinions its object. Journalists were simply seen as another link in the conveyor-belt of the Party. They could be trusted to be reliable and dull. Along with their colleagues in radio and TV, they had an important role in manipulating and controlling "public opinion."

It is not a very enviable task. Yet it would be misleading to conclude that Eastern European journalists form an army of intellectual zombies, obediently developing and illustrating the party line, the stakhanovites of the typewriter. There have been times when they have had real influence, and have not hesitated to use it. The most dramatic instance was in Czechoslovakia during the Dubcek Spring, when TV interviews were used to cross-question party leaders. It was the first revolution achieved on—and through—television. Its effectiveness can be judged by the grim repression which followed: 2,000 journalists, half the profession, lost their jobs.

But other less dramatic instances are no less significant. After the Polish "little Spring" of 1956 Gomulka told journalists that they had a vital role to play in "influencing the Party leadership": they knew better what was really happening among the people, and had to convey this information upwards. They were a two-way transmission belt. Ironically, Gomulka's speech was not published until long afterwards. And ironically Gomulka fell in December 1970 because he had become out of touch with popular aspirations.

The statements of Gomulka and Brezhnev provide the parameters for the current discussion which is going on over the smoked salmon and vodka among Eastern European journalists: are they merely "precious instruments of the Party" or do they have to educate the Party? There are still plenty of impenitent crypto-Stalinists around who repeat the official theses. They make no contribution to the discussion. They are in control in Romania, Bulgaria, Albania (where all public manifestations of religion have been wiped out) and, casting the net more widely, in North Korea and Vietnam. In all these countries there is no "social role" for journalists, except one of inducing conformity.

But elsewhere it is possible to find more open-minded journalists who are not content to be faithful parrots. To call them "liberal" would be misleading as well as damaging to them. They prefer to be called "modern." While the neo-Stalinists fear the outside world and try to screen out Western sources, the Modernists want to enter into discussion with them. The Stalinists jam Radio Free Europe, the Modernists listen to the BBC. Technological developments are making it increasingly difficult to seal off Eastern Europe, and the Modernists know it: already 80 percent of the German Democratic Republic can receive television from West Germany; and most of Estonia can receive Finnish TV. Worse, or better, according to the point of view, is to come.

Naturally enough, it is the foreign correspondents of East European news agencies who are most exposed to Western influencies. For that reason they are hand-picked and untypical. They filter Western news on pragmatic more than ideological grounds. I once asked a correspondent from PAP, the unfortunately named Polish news agency, whether he was reporting the British miners' strike which in early 1974 "brought the country to its knees" and lost Edward Heath the premiership. After all, the strikes might be said to illustrate the thesis that capitalism was going through a rough patch, even if not entering its final agony. But the man from PAP was not reporting the strikes, because to do so might put ideas into the head of Polish miners. After the actions of the Gdansk shipyard workers in December 1970, nothing must be reported which might encourage industrial disruption or the display of working-class muscle.

Journalists can "influence the government," though to call them a pressure group would be to go too far. They can defend the citizens, though with due circum-

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spection, against the crassness of the courts or the bureaucrats. *Tribuna Ludu* in Warsaw gained a reputation for being the defender of the little man. But letters to the press also provide a safety-valve and yet another means of social control: the vast majority of letters are never published but, suitably summarized, they are forwarded to the Central Committee in the form of confidential reports. The Party can then have a clearer idea of what people are really thinking and take appropriate action. Standardized editorials can then be produced to ward off dangerous trends. In 1964, for example, there was a spate of editorial comment on the correct concept of "socialist legality," intended to head off the dissidents' potential exploitation of this promising theme.

Censorship further limits the area of maneuver. It exists *by law* only in Russia, Poland and Romania, though it is of course also applied elsewhere. But paradoxically the existence of censorship is a sign of feared and possible non-conformity. In the German Democratic Republic it is not required because the journalists are so integrated into the power élite that dangerous thoughts never cross their minds. Self-censorship does the job, and the East German press is among the most predictable and depressing in the world. In Poland, on the other hand, censorship is an indication that conformity cannot be guaranteed in advance. The Editor of *Polityka* in Warsaw actually prefers to be censored: it shows that he is not a tame nonentity.

The "confessional" press, where it exists, is an important area of relative freedom, and its influence is out of proportion to its artificially restricted circulation. The Catholic weekly, *Tygodnik Powszechny,* published by the Znak group in Cracow, has a print order of forty thousand, a mere drop in the ocean of Poland's thirty million Catholics. Its editorial meetings have to take account of the censor's known sensitivities. After many years of experience, they come to know what he will take and what not. Sometimes a comment that would not be permitted in an editorial can be more subtly conveyed in a cartoon or slipped into a book review. *Tygodnik Powszechny* has two further claims to distinction. It was the only paper in Eastern Europe which refused to praise Stalin after his death in 1953. It was suppressed for its honesty, but rose from the ashes in the Polish "Spring" of 1956, by which time Stalinism was officially in disgrace.

Its other claim to fame and uniqueness is that it has engaged in polemics with the establishment. In 1968 Gomulka declared that there could be "no freedom of expression for the enemies of freedom." Three weeks later a columnist in *Tygodnik Powszechny* coolly replied that freedom of expression was indivisible: it existed for all the people, or it did not exist at all. A similar

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spirit of independence has been shown by *Glas Koncila* in Zagreb which dared in 1972 to publish Solzhenitsyn's letter to the Russian Patriarch and then, compounding its felony, accounts of the arrest of priests in Lithuania. Though occasional offensive numbers are suppressed, *Glas Koncila* survives. Sometimes Catholic editors of Eastern European papers complain that they have more trouble from the bishops than from the censors. The Yugoslav journal *Svesci* roused the wrath of the bishops when it reprinted an article on sexual anthropology from a foreign journal in 1972. But the "Church of Silence" is not wholly voiceless.

The literary press has also played an honorable role alongside the confessional press. The interaction between journalists and writers is strong—they are often the same people, and the East European tradition of a responsible intelligentsia remains tenaciously alive. Even in Russia *Novyi Mir* showed an independence which led to the sacking of its Editor, Aleksandr Tvardovskii. Perhaps of more significance was the sacking of the Editor of *Molodaia Gvardia,* journal of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, no less, in 1970. This was part of the wide-ranging attack on "russophilism" and *rusoznavstvo* (the desire for excessive knowledge about things Russian). Brezhnev solemnly warned that "patriotism was good but that extremes of patriotism represented the danger of a departure from class-consciousness." The neo-slavophile movement deserves separate treatment, but it is worth noting here that this movement to return to Russian origins is not tender towards America. A writer in *Veche,* suppressed in 1974, thought that there was little to choose between West and East. On the one hand one had "mindless, vapid propaganda"; and on the other, "pornography and detective stories."

In Czechoslovakia the literary review *Literárm Noviny* helped to prepare the change in the intellectual climate which made Dubcek briefly possible. From 1966 to 1967 Vitezslav Gardavsky published a series of articles in which he attempted, as a convinced Marxist, to come to terms with Christianity: it might be mistaken, but the questions it raises are real questions and cannot be dismissed by repression or dialectical finesse. Leszek Kolakowski was arguing a similar case in the Polish journal *Tworczorc.* Though Gardavsky inevitably lost his job in the Military Academy in Brno, where he was professor of philosophy, and though Kolakowski is now in exile, there is an astonishing resilience among the literary intelligentsia which repression can curb but not extinguish. Petitions and open letters still find signatories.

In the post-Helsinki period, when the realities of its grandiose declarations have to be tested and embodied, journalists have a key and irreplaceable role. They know more, have better contacts with the West, and have learned how to work despite the blundering clumsiness of their censors. Any account of the "factors for change in Eastern Europe" must include them.

THE SCREEN

The opening scene in *Swashbuckler* establishes all the ground rules. Pirate Nick Debrett (James Earl Jones) is about to be hung by a detail of troops with Major Folly (Beau Bridges) in command. After having cut short the prayers of a chaplain whose manner suggests he's used to being cut short, Folly is ready to be unaware that, behind his back, the ship of Capt. Ned Lynch (Robert Shaw) has sailed into view beyond the ramparts of Kingston on which they stand. As Folly orders the trap door sprung beneath poor Nick, Lynch's first salvo clears away the masonry in back of Folly and alters the expression on his face from stupid officiousness to stupid astonishment. Although Folly manages to bluster a few orders, essentially he and his troops take cover and wait for Lynch to finish blowing the ramparts to smithereens. Only Nick remains in bold view, partly because the rope is still around his neck, but more, judging by the expression on *his* face, because he is confident Lynch can demolish the ramparts with cannon fire without touching him in the process.

What is being suggested by any number of things here—the expression on Nick's face, the part of the chaplain, Folly's folly—is crystallized in the scene when Lynch's ship heaves to so he can swing ashore to rescue Nick. With an unwavering chorus-girl smile fixed on his face, Lynch supervises as deckhands leap onto the ramparts to secure the line on which he is to swoop down and snatch Nick from the jaws of death. Since such derring-do cannot be accomplished on a sky hook, there is a few moments' delay while the crew rigs up something for Lynch to swing from. Folly's troops cower patiently while all this is accomplished, and at last Lynch swings gracefully ashore, still beaming, to Nick's side. There is now another brief respite while Nick's bonds are cut, then he and Lynch are airborne again on their return to the ship.

A certain clumsy ponderousness with which all this occurs might almost be a step in the direction of greater screen realism. Swashbuckling has always been the most artificial of all the genres save, perhaps, the musical. We knew all along that, even if privateers did swing from adventure to adventure like Tarzan through the jungle, they never did it so facilely, so deftly, so quickly and so spontaneously as Errol Flynn would have led us to believe. But there is something about this scene in *Swashbuckler* that goes too far. It goes beyond all realism and becomes even more preposterous than swashbuckling was in its heydey. The slowness of the scene is not elaborative, but dilatory. It results not from the inherent awkwardness of what these men are

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trying to do, but from the ridiculously casual and unconcerned attitude they take in doing it. Along with Folly's ineptness and everything else in this scene, the leisurely pace at which it proceeds assures us that there is no contest here. This is a lark we are on rather than an adventure.

Even more than the Western, the Swashbuckler is a genre set in a time and place so remote and peripheral, none of us feels any responsibility for the history that occurs there. This makes it ideal for doing what all genres try to do: write the history of our own times under the pretense of showing us someone else's. Although it is a far more neglected genre than the Western —perhaps because it is a little too remote—the Swashbuckler is even better suited than the Western to be a neutral medium, a *tabula rasa,* for contemporary mores. We have so little hard and independent information on the Swashbuckler's times that we are at liberty to write, erase, modify and rewrite what was written before without fear of contradiction.

In the Swashbuckler of yesteryear, for instance, the leading lady was usually some gentlewoman in distress, an Olivia de Havilland or Rhonda Fleming who was appalled, or even fainty, at the bad manners and rough ways of whatever brigand she fell prey to. As a rule she came into her pirate's custody as unexpected, unwanted plunder, and then, for awhile at least, she would turn into a ward whose guardianship would be pure embarrassment to him. Later, if she were lucky, a little romance might come of it all.

But times have, as they say, changed. When the leading lady (Genvieve Bujold) makes her first appearance in this film, she is in the process of being dispossessed by Folly at the orders of the real villain of the piece, the Lord High Governor (Peter Boyle). As she and her mother are being turned out of their home, Folly tries to take the liberty of searching their luggage. At this the wellbred young maiden's character is immediately established as Folly finds a knife pressed to his groin and she coos, "Let us pass or I'll cut them off." In subsequent scenes she takes on one of Lynch's whores in a saloon brawl, holds her own in a sword fight against Lynch himself, makes overtures to him that are strictly business, and upsets life aboard his ship not by her prissiness, like the Swashbuckler heroines we used to see, but by her immodesty. In other words, she remains throughout true to her nature in that first scene—until she and Lynch fall into each other's arms, and in love, in accordance with all the old formulas.

Despite the heroine's timely sauciness and other modern improvements, however, *Swashbuckler* has not tampered too much with the ancient machinery of its genre. Director Goldstone has had sense enough to realize that the fact he was making a parody did not excuse him from having as many stupendous action sequences as a straight Swashbuckler would have. On the contrary, it required that such sequences be more outlandish than ever. Shaw, Goldstone and the others so clearly enjoyed the romp they had making this movie that even if it had nothing else to recommend it, their good spirits would still be amusing. Jamaica, as is well known, is a swell place to take a vacation, and that is obviously just what everyone in *Swashbuckler* did there. The resulting movie is a couple of hours vacation itself.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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MARY THERESE HOARE

OCEAN GROVE

The old people at Ocean Grove
still gather
on gray porches

to fan away
another hour

in the bleached houses
that resemble them so.

Slowly, they count
the dusty shells

as each
twilight passes and
their wicker voices fade . . .

FREDERICK MORGAN

● ● ● ● ● ●

MAITREYA

Life is a flame (he said)
before the wind blows . . .

life is a flame
as though in itself enduring.

Not much to be done, when all is said,
about that wind.

After a year—or
a billion years it may be,

speech to be extinguished,
the mobile body shudder to its end

and the words array themselves
on a high meadow, burning.

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ELIE WIESEL AND THE HOLOCAUST

HARRY JAMES CARGAS

Mike Royko's biography of Mayor Richard Daley struck one of my students as a work of fiction. "Clearly," the young man said to our class, "the kinds of things described as happening in *Boss* can't be historically true—they must spring from the author's imagination."

Much else in contemporary affairs has been likewise suspect by at least some in our society: Did we really place men on the moon? Can the events of the Watergate affair have actually occurred? Where is Jimmy Hoffa? What's the truth about Mylai? Was there a Howard Hughes? Each of us can, very naturally, assemble a personal roster of such doubts and while a list like this can be an amusement, it has its roots in very serious philosophic ground.

Contemporary literature certainly reflects this. Practitioners of *le nouveau roman* in France are obsessed by the question of how reality is perceived. In a novel like *Jealousy*, Alain Robbe-Grillet can give us detail after descriptive detail and when we close the book we cannot be certain that any of the events related ever happened. Raymond Queneau goes further in, for example, *The Flight of Icarus*, when he has a novelist search for characters he has created who have jumped off his page, incarnated themselves, and begin to interact with his real friends. But are the characters any less real than the novelist himself, who is simply a construction of Queneau's? This will remind us of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s intrusion into his own novel, *Breakfast of Champions*, in order to give one of the characters, Kilgore Trout, his freedom.

And of course there are so many other writers who can be cited here: There is Argentina's Jorge Luis Borges who, in a parable, "Borges and I" can observe at its conclusion, "I do not know which one of us has written this page." Or there is the Borges of "The Circular Ruins" whose main character is horrified to learn "that he too was a mere appearance, dreamt by another."

Colombia's Gabriel Garcia Marquez, writing in a kind of heightened magical realism, particularly in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (perhaps Spanish America's greatest novel), must be mentioned. So should Carlos Fuentes of Mexico whose novella, *Aura*, finds a young historian coming to the realization that the young woman he thinks he is making love to in bed is actually his employer, in her nineties, who has projected an image onto him in order to keep him in her employ. We may go to Japan, too, and read Yukio Mishima whose final and major work, the tetralogy titled *The Sea of Fertility*, ends with Honda, the person through whom the action is filtered to us, being staggered concerning the illusoriness of life. When it is suggested that the man whose history Honda was observing, through several incarnations, probably never existed, he utters, in despair: "If there was no Kiyoaki, then there was no Isao. There was no Ying Chan, and who knows, perhaps there has been no I."

The questions proliferate in modern literature concerning the meaning of life, the meaning of humanity. There is one genre, however, which, while also positing doubt, if we may say it that way, by questioning God rather than persons, heaven rather than the world, actually concludes with a kind of hope which may be opposed to the despair of a Mishima, a Vonnegut, or a Robbe-Grillet. This genre has been labeled Holocaust Literature.

The authors of this literature, particularly those who are survivors of the Nazi concentration camps, sometimes demand answers from God, sometimes scold, defy, rebel against God, but most seem to voice their doubts within a context that admits of God's existence. In a way their attitude of faith has been summed up by Elie Wiesel in his cantata *Ani Ma'amin*: ". . . the silence of God is God." Some are more strident, recalling the "atheist" Bendrix in Graham Greene's Catholic novel *The End of the Affair* who, after the woman he loves is lost in death, metaphorically shakes his fist at a God he has been denying and says these words which close the book: "O God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough, I'm too tired and old to learn to love, leave me alone forever."

We must not conclude, however, that the questions asked of God by Wiesel, Nelly Sachs, Paul Celan, Primo Levi, Jakov Lind, Andre Schwarz-Bart, Emmanuel Ringelblum, Lena Donat, Joset Bor and so many others are necessarily far removed from the doubts of Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, Michael Butor, Jean Cayrol, Robert Antelme, Fuentes, Severo Sarduy, and still others. It may be less than a giant step from doubt in man to faith in God. Perhaps the best illustration of this is found in the work of a man who progressed from the night of Auschwitz to at least the approachables of faith (for, after all, who can say that one truly has belief), Elie Wiesel.

Those who write a type of literature of frustration raise their questions from that frustration. Wiesel and others, on the contrary, see in their

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queries the very basis of life. Edmond Jabes, a Jew born in Egypt, now writing in Paris, has said so succinctly, "God is a questioning God." Wiesel presents this view in a number of his works. In the autobiographical book *Night*, we read the words of Moché, the mystically mad seer: "Man raises himself toward God by the questions he asks . . ." This same person says a moment later, "I pray to God within me that He will give me the strength to ask Him the right questions."

In a novel, one character insists that "The essence of man is to be a question, and the essence of the question is to be without answer." In another of Wiesel's novels we read, "Only the questions matter." In an interview which forms the basis for my book *Conversations with Elie Wiesel*, I asked Wiesel about his idea that questions are more important than answers. Here is his response.

"Yes, they are because the questions remain; the answers change. The questions that Adam asked when he was alive we are still repeating. The basic questions are always the same: What am I doing here? What is the purpose of my life? The purpose of my meeting people? What is the aim, God, death, freedom? All the real questions stay basically the same. The answers change and are being revised. They go and come back and go and come back, to infinity.

"What divides people is not the question, it is the answer. If it hadn't been for answers, there would have been no wars. Question, I think, comes from the word 'quest.' If people were to share their quest and make it a common quest, there could be a better time, a better fate, a better society. But they, for some reason, want to give answers, maybe because we need answers. The answers are all temporary, while those who give the answers see them as eternal. Hence divisions, dissensions, wars, death.

"If I use these ideas so often, it's because I relate them to our generation and to our experience. Those experiences of which I try to speak have no answers, should have no answers. I'm afraid of anyone who comes with a theory, a system, based on that experience. I am suspicious; I don't want theories. I believe the experience was above and beyond theories and systems and philosophies. What remains is the question: How, What and Why. . .?"

Because answers divide, are incomplete, are lies, one response to the mysteries of existence is silence. This is not something negative but rather a kind of prayer, a listening to God. Wiesel ends one of his non-fiction volumes by saying that silence, ". . . demands to be recognized and transmitted."

The transmission is, of course, of ultimate importance for many survivors of the Holocaust. Eugene Heimler said it remarkably: there were "messages I had to deliver to the living from the dead. . . . Of their dead, burnt bodies I would be the voice." Wiesel too is obsessed with being such a bearer. He feels his responsibility to the dead. He told me, "I don't have the right not to communicate." He fears having said too much, perhaps thus cheapening what he wishes to commemorate; but he nevertheless must not be destructive in a silent way. (In his book *The Jews of Silence* Wiesel distinguishes between constructive silence—illustrated by the praying Jews of Russia —and the destructive silence of Jews throughout the world who refuse to act on behalf of their suffering brothers and sisters.)

This philosophy must inevitably affect the author's style. His has been called a literature of silence. An example or two may be in order. In *Night* Wiesel tells of seeing a young boy hanged. His body was so emaciated that it did not weigh enough to help him to die. For over half an hour he continued swaying, struggling between life and death. About his own reaction the author has but seven words: "That night the soup tasted of corpses." In that same book we read of a cattle car experience. The writer witnesses a son murder his own father in order to steal bread from the old man's mouth. The killer is, in turn, beaten to death by others. Again the reaction: "I was fifteen years old." Silence, for Wiesel, is beyond language, beyond lies.

In his critical work *Language and Silence*, George Steiner parallels Wiesel profoundly: "It is just because we can go no further, because speech so precisely fails us, that we experience the certitude of a divine meaning surpassing and enfolding ours. What lies beyond man's word is eloquent of God."

Not to write, for Wiesel, as for so many other survivors of Hitler's camps, would be a betrayal. How then do they understand this minimal breaking of silence? Again Wiesel provides some clues. He knows what every Jew knows, that for 6,000,000 victims it will be impossible to say the memorial Kaddish at their graves because either the sites are unknown or there are no graves. "My generation has been robbed of everything, even of our cemeteries." (We are grimly reminded of what is probably the best known work by Nobel poet Nelly Sachs, "O, the Chimneys.") So Wiesel says that "the act of writing is for me often nothing more than the secret or conscious desire to carve words on a tombstone: to the memory of a town forever vanished, to the memory of a childhood in exile, to the memory of all those I loved and who before I could tell them I loved them, went away."

Beyond this, Wiesel would agree with Jabes on the seriousness of the writer's work. "I believe in the writer's mission. He receives it from the word, which carries its suffering and its hope within it. He questions the words which question him. He accompanies the words which accompany him." In writing, the contributor to Holocaust Literature is acting out a destiny. As Wiesel has noted in a work composed of spiritual biographies of Hasidic teachers, ". . . some words are as important as deeds—some words *are* deeds." And again, in one of his novels: "In taking a single word by assault it is possible to discover the secret of creation, the center where all threads come together."

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Wiesel's works, then, like those of other important Holocaust writers, be they diarists, chroniclers, playwrights, novelists, or poets, are not so much lamentations as they are deeds. They can be distinguished from the writings of Robbe-Grillet, Ionesco, Beckett, and others because they are acts of faith—*even as questions* because those questions are addressed to God rather than being images of absurdity. We are asked to risk *with* Wiesel and the others rather than despair alone. They live out the teaching of the Rabbi in Wiesel's drama *Zalmen, or the Madness of God*: "God requires of man not that he live, but that he choose to live. What matters is to choose—at the risk of being defeated."

Wiesel has chosen, Sachs has chosen, Levi has chosen, Donat has chosen, Bor has chosen . . . the list is at once unfortunately and fortunately very long. These writers intuited what Jesuit critic William F. Lynch has articulated regarding the sanctity of language—language as gift laid at the divine altar.

". . . all language is public and a public act; in all my language I pledge that what I say is what I think; according to the code and game and life of language I make a pledge and expect belief—not belief in what I say, for we expect to find out that we are fools or stupid or mistaken, but belief that what I say is what I think. Language then belongs to the very marrow of the body of faith."

BOOKS

POETRY: THREE IN A BUMPER YEAR

ROBERT PHILLIPS

Available Light
PHILIP BOOTH
Viking, $5.95

Fellow Feelings
RICHARD HOWARD
Atheneum, $4.95 (paper)

The Mind-Reader
RICHARD WILBUR
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $6.95

Robert Frost spoke of two kinds of poet—one who likes his potato scrubbed clean, and one who leaves some dirt on it. Here are new books by one poet who prefers his nature *au naturel*, and two who are meticulous scrubbers. They are among the best in a remarkable year for American poetry: 1976 already has seen new collections by Horace Gregory, Archibald MacLeish, Karl Shapiro, Robert Lowell, Richard Eberhart, John Hollander, James Merrill, Louis Simpson, and the late Anne Sexton, with volumes by Elizabeth Bishop, Irving Feldman, and Robert Penn Warren forthcoming.

I've never understood why Philip Booth is not more widely admired. ". . . if I hadn't turned poet / I might well be some other / sort of accountant," he tells us in a poem from this new collection. And an accountant he is—tallying up our human losses and gains in poems as deceptively simple as a ledger sheet. In poem after poem Booth's universal conclusions are earned by the punctilious particulars which precede them, nowhere more impressively than in "Wear," from this, his fifth collection.

Available Light is familiar Booth, but also more varied than his previous books. The forms are the same—tall skinny poems with short lines, a form one might in jest suggest was born of *The New Yorker*'s policy of paying for poetry by the line. And the style surely is the same, understated and Anglo-Saxon as Hemingway's prose. In the past Booth's most striking technical device has been his use of enjambment, and he continues to surprise with it here, as in this break between second and third lines: "On the far side / of the storm / window . . .", lines which give us both the far side of the storm and the far side of the window.

What is different in *Available Light* is not voice or technique, but subject. Hithertofore Booth has been almost exclusively a Georgian, and a Maine Georgian at that. (He is, so far as I know, the first poet to put *gurry*—fish offal—in a poem.) The new book widens this poet's world to include poems of Russia and Peru, psychescapes of the dreamworld, several poems on the work of photographers (Walker Evans, Ralph Eugene Meatyard), and on the lives of poets (Auden and Delmore Schwartz). Booth also gives us a purely imagistic poem, "A Late Spring: Eastport," brittle and precise as H.D. or the Levertov of "The Tulips"—a surprise from Booth, who not normally is given to strong image-making, depending for effect more upon tone, near-rhyme, and enjambment.

Despite these departures in subject, Booth's best are still the New England poems. These include "Let the Trees," "Stove," and "The Way the Tide Comes In." The volume's best poem, the already-mentioned and autobiographical "Wear"—in which the poet utilizes the purely mechanical failure of automotive parts as metaphor for the failing of the flesh: "What hurts / is how blind tired I get." It is a poem as perfect as his best, "First Lesson," from his first collection, totally original and understated.

I regret only five lines in the whole book. In "Entry," the lines, "Given /

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this day, none/better" seem a bit Frost-bitten. In "Adding It Up" one has to think of Elinor Wylie's "Down to the Puritan marrow of my bones" when Booth states, "I'm Puritan to the bone, down to / the marrow." But these unintentional echoes—if they exist at all outside this reviewer's ear—are minor flaws in a strong and original book.

No poets could be more different than Booth is from Richard Howard and Richard Wilbur. Booth's forte is to speak plainly; Howard's and Wilbur's to sing elegantly. Which is not to say Howard resembles Wilbur except for erudition and a penchant for the witty, for use of allusion to artifacts of the past to instruct the present.

There is a scheme behind the publication of Howard's books. After the appearance of *Untitled Subjects*—a cycle of long poems—came *Findings*—a gathering of shorter unrelated ones. *Fellow Feelings*, the present volume, is for the most part work brief and varied. It follows *Two-Part Inventions*, six long dramatic poems obviously conceived as a book and not a gathering. With Howard shorter is not slighter! *Fellow Feelings* contains some of his most impressive work. These include "Venetian Interior, 1889," a remarkably full rendering of the sad world of Pen Browning; "Decades"; and "The Giant on Giant-Killing." The latter two utilize Hart Crane's history and Donatello's bronze of David, respectively, to illumine Howard's own life. Both poems openly explore homosexuality: indeed, the book is the most out-of-the-closet collection since Howard's own *Two-Part Inventions*. Rather than being sensational, Howard's poems convey tenderness, and seek understanding. He movingly pictures both himself and Crane as on "permanent short-leave from the opposite sex." In "The Giant on Giant-Killing" we are given a defense of homosexuality, yet are reminded that the name Goliath, while meaning *destroyer* in Assyrian, means *exile* in Hebrew. Throughout the volume there is a feeling of singularity and alienation.

Howard's most felicitous gift is for the well-turned epigram. Some are worthy of Wilde: "Ripeness is hell"; "The tiny is the last resort of the tremendous"; "Kissing is not cosmetic, merely cosmic"; "We are what we see"; "The sacred and the suburban often coincide;" etc. The danger Howard risks is that he displays too much wit. Verbal pyrotechnics call attention to themselves, rather than to the meaning they are employed to convey. There are a few occasions when his use of a pun, however delicious, nearly wrecks the fabric he has so carefully woven, as in "The Lesson of the Master" (from his previous book) when his Mrs. Wharton replies, improbably, "Manqué see, manqué do"; and in the present book: "Poets should be obscene and not stirred"; "Cleveland was our mother-in-lieu"; and the disastrous "Setting mere Rothschildsplay aside. . ."

Yet all wit and wordplay are employed to extremely serious ends. If the book has two misfires ("Compulsive Qualifications" and "Howard's Way"—poems in which questionable subjects seem paraded rather than contemplated), it also has many direct hits on fascinating and difficult targets. Howard is one of our most original poets.

"The strength of the genie comes of his being confined in the bottle," Richard Wilbur once said, an obvious justification of his work in strict metrical forms. Like Howard, Wilbur writes poems which are brilliant and elegant. He is the one poet who seems to own the word "ceremony." And Wilbur's diction is as elevated as his choice of subject, perhaps too elevated to win a wide audience (as if any poet in America wins an audience which is wide!) Nevertheless, while adding to the poems' musicality, such adjectives as "paludal," "crenellate" and "vatic"; such verbs as "brisked," "gangled," and "fuddles"; and such nouns as "concatenation," "oubliette," and "concupiscence" (all taken from the new book) make his work seem more grand than his subjects often are. He has written splendidly, for instance, on the homely potato. In his choice of vocabulary and strict forms, Mr. Wilbur obviously does not care about changing fashions in poetry. And writing today much as he did three decades ago, he has produced another book which will be read long after the disposable poems of today's more "with-it" poets are discarded.

The only fault with *The Mind-Reader* is that it is not longer. Wilbur's first collection since 1969, it contains but twenty-seven poems and nine translations. Of the latter, his rendering of Joseph Brodsky's "The Funeral of Bobo" is as simple and affecting as his earlier "Prayer to Go to Heaven With the Donkeys," of Francis Jammes. Of the original poems, "The Writer"—with its metaphor of artist as dazed starling involved in a life and death act—is one of the most memorable. So too is "The Eye," especially its Part II, in which the poet reminds us of our inherent humbleness, entreating that we embrace not some, but all creatures, the halt and blind alike: "Charge me to see/ In all bodies the best of spirit. . ." It reminds us of Salinger's entreaty for us to love the fat lady.

Other welcome new additions to the Wilbur canon are "A Wedding Toast" —obviously an epithalamium for his daughter's nuptials; and "Cottage Street, 1953," a portrait of the young, suicidal Sylvia Plath and her mother visiting Wilbur and his mother-in-law. (Not mother-in-lieu.) Plath, condemned to live, went on to write what Wilbur calls "her brilliant negative" in poems "free and helpless and unjust." That Wilbur finds the stance of the so-called confessional poets unjust, unearned, is made manifest in the second of his "Flippances," in which he states the confessional poet justifies putting most anything into a poem except happiness: "All hangs together if you take it hard." Wilbur cheerfully eschews such self-dramatization, prefering, no doubt, to identify with his "Black Birch in Winter," a tree which manages to survive and grow to greater wisdom each year, "To grow, stretch, crack, and not yet come apart.' Or as Wilbur says elsewhere, "There is nothing to do with a day except to live with it." If Richard

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Wilbur is our national poet of sanity, he also is our poet of delight.

Nightmare—The Underside of the Nixon Years

J. ANTHONY LUKAS

Viking Press, $15

The Final Days

BOB WOODWARD & CARL BERNSTEIN

Simon and Schuster, $10

The Time of Illusion

JONATHAN SCHELL

Alfred A. Knopf, $10

C. PETER RIPLEY

Reading Watergate is a melancholy affair. A detailed recounting of Watergate-type activities, when blended with a philosophical framework which leaves little doubt about the pervasiveness of the White House attitude which courted those activities, is sobering.

Lukas' *Nightmare* is the most factually complete study of Watergate defined in its broadest terms. And Lukas hints with his subtitle—*The Underside of the Nixon Years*—how broad he feels that is. It is all there. Prefaced with a discussion of the White House "us or them" attitude, *Nightmare* tells of leaks and tapes, plumbers, laundered money, dirty tricks, break-ins, cover-ups, shady real estate deals, presidential tapes, impeachment and the whole cast of characters. Lukas provides the most detailed record of Nixon's abuse of presidential powers, with the break-in at the Watergate office of the Democratic National Committee simply appearing as a wide spot in the road.

Woodstein (nee Woodward and Bernstein) know as many facts as Lukas, but their purpose is different and their scope is narrower. Starting with the Fall of 1973—with painstaking detail and a good many revelations—they chronicle the events leading to Nixon's resignation in the late Summer of 1974. It is a story of many levels. One of lawyers, committees and judges jockeying for position over tapes and subpoenas and assorted Watergate paraphenalia. Another more political story of aides and public servants and friends who at first resisted the logic of events and tried to preserve the Nixon presidency and then tried simply to save the presidency so that it might be handed to Gerald Ford after impeachment or resignation, whichever came first. Yet another more personal story is of Nixon and the first family, a story filled with anguish and pain and an apparent inability to comprehend what had brought them such despair.

Jonathan Schell provides the framework to understand the events which were at first the underside of the Nixon years and which later consumed the Nixon years. In barest outline, Schell proposes that the Nixon presidency was shaped by the diplomatic doctrine of credibility—that is, the need to convince the world of America's willingness to fight limited wars as a substitute for nuclear face-offs. The obvious example is Vietnam which became a matter of "peace with honor," not peace for substantative reasons, but peace based on an understanding that the United States would stand by its commitments there. The resolute image we presented to Russia and China mattered; what happened in Vietnam aside from that image mattered little. It was the illusion of what we were doing in Vietnam that became important to the Nixon presidency. And Schell theorizes that the White House concept of actions and events and positions and statements as illusions—not as self-suporting realities—spilled over into domestic affairs and poisoned that well, too. Image and substance became disjointed during *The Time of Illusion.*

Lukas and Woodstein provide the who, what, when and where. Schell provides the why. Pretty complete, or so it seems. Through the prism of contemporary observation these books are for the most part satisfying. Through the prism of professional history they are less so.

Written history emerges dialectically. A first wave of writing on a subject will frequently give way to a second or third or forth, each with its new or different analysis and interpretation. But each successive wave builds upon the other. New research or a new viewpoint challenges accepted conclusions, and that provides the antithesis from which comes a new thesis. And then the process starts again.

A critical link in the process is checking and retracing earlier work. Few historians researching a subject would or could or should accept at face value everything that other historians have previously written on that topic. The existing printed literature may provide contradictions, ambiguities, voids, and more new questions than answers. Any or all those circumstances demands a return to the original research documents. Problems arise when, for whatever reasons, that cannot be done. And we are going to have problems with the corpus of Watergate literature.

The difficulty comes not from blatant misuse of documents or information—that is not the question—rather, problems arise with differing interpretations of documents and information. The June 23 tape is the most obvious example in this context. For most listeners that tape was the "smoking gun" which ended the Nixon presidency by linking the President to Watergate much earlier than he had previously admitted. But for others the tape was less of a lethal weapon; the conversations, claimed Nixon partisans, were open to more than one interpretation, and they insisted on selecting one that was less damaging to the President. Amid such conflicting claims few authors would write about that June 23 meeting from what others have said of the tape—they would want to listen and judge for themselves. So too with all other critical sources of information.

Schell's book is most satisfying here: partly because of the type of study he has given us (it is more a "think piece" and less dependent upon the myriad of facts or the specific actions of the Watergate crew), and partly because

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he has taken all his information from available printed records, and lastly because he has included an annotated note on sources broken down by chapter which directs us to the materials used in each unit. With some effort we could retrace most, but certainly not all, of Schell's research.

Lukas' study is at once more troublesome because it is a nuts and bolts story of Watergate from first to last—the most detailed to date, filled with twists and turns and memos and conversations and conflicting stories. Yet he too attempted to guide interested readers to his source materials through annotated chapter notes. He warns of sources being self-seeking or unreliable and mentions which, if any, source dominated a chapter and pays particular attention to those documents which he felt shed new light.

Woodstein concedes nothing in this matter. *The Final Days* is based on interviews with 394 people, all conducted "on background" which means the information is usable but the source remains confidential. *The Final Days* abounds with frustrating journeys into people's private thoughts and with tidbits and revelations from unidentified sources all mixed with an occasional detailed and private conversation between Nixon and one other person which leaves no doubt about the source (Nixon refused to be interviewed). Readers (including historians) have to take the credibility of *The Final Days* on faith. Many are apparently reluctant to do that.

The problem is partly one of definitions. When does a reporter doing a book become a contemporary historian? and what is a contemporary historian? and when is a contemporary historian not as responsible to the strictures of the profession as a traditional historian? Woodward and Bernstein consider themselves journalists, judging from the style and form of *The Final Days*. (And that has no pejorative implication. It was, after all, their journalistic skills which broke the whole business open.) But they deprive authors who will follow of a vital link in the historical dialectic. Transcripts of their interviews are not available to researchers, nor could those efforts ever be satisfactorily duplicated.

Schell and Lukas more easily fall into that nebulous group labeled contemporary historians. Their work is based on extensive research in documents and public records as well as interviews, and their descriptive chapter notes suggest a blend of footnotes and annotated bibliographies. Though lacking the specific references provided by footnotes, the chapter notes will assist those who follow.

It is a cheeky reviewer who is critical of how books are documented. But nothing in our recent history fascinated, beguiled, frustrated and shamed the nation the way Watergate did, and while those events have passed, the fascination remains. There will be more contemporary books and articles on the Watergate Epic, and when that is done the traditional historians will take over. The process will be smoother, surer, and more satisfying if each new piece could profit from those which preceded.

Where the Law Ends: The Social Control of Corporate Behavior

CHRISTOPHER D. STONE

Harper & Row, $12.95

EDWARD S. HERMAN

It is difficult to write an attractive, credible, and yet "positive" book on the social control of corporate behavior. The difficulty arises out of the corporate system's power, adaptability, and capacity for swallowing reforms and reformers without observable effect or trace. Modest reforms, such as increasing penalties for antitrust or EPA violations, have negligible, effects, and what impact they do have may be at the expense of the wrong people (the shareholders, workers, or consumers, rather than the controlling managements). More drastic changes that might begin to have a significant effect on corporate behavior, such as direct government intrusion into management, regulation, or outright nationalization, appear both politically unattainable and of doubtful desirability given the nature of government and regulation in our contemporary environment. In short, "practical" proposals for the social control of the corporation are likely to be quite ineffectual, while brutal realism gives satisfaction only to curmudgeons and negativists.

Despite these difficulties, Thurman Arnold produced a classic on this subject in 1937, *The Folklore of Capitalism*, by blending realism with a light and cynical portrayal of the imperatives of the system and the Quixotic character of reformism. Still earlier, Thorstein Veblen in his *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904), combined a unique irony with a broad analysis that led him to the conclusion that "the exigencies of business enterprise" must prevail, and that "The question, therefore, remains, on the whole, a question of what the business man may be expected to do for cultural growth on the motive of profits." Christopher Stone is more positive than his great prede-

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cessors, but he lacks their wit and breadth of vision, and his analysis is compromised, in part, perhaps, in the interest of being "constructive." *Where the Law Ends* is a valuable work, with many good things in it, done with care and sophistication. But it is a book for today, not for the ages, and it is vulnerable even within its own narrower framework.

Though written by a lawyer, there is a curious inconsistency in *Where the Law Ends* on the role of law in society. In the early pages especially, there is a disconcerting tendency to personify the law and give it a life of its own. ("The law . . . had very little occasion to consider whether the rules it was fashioning to control people might be inappropriate as applied to corporations.") This is in pursuit of the theme that our problems "are a legacy of the law's failure to search out and take into account" the features of corporations that make them distinct from individuals. This point was developed by Thurman Arnold, but without the naive presumption that the legal personification of the corporation was an accidental holdover from the past, not explicable in terms of corporate power and needs. In later sections of his book Stone does come to grips with the difficulties of changing the law in a society where corporations are such important actors, molders of ideology, and wielders of influence in legislative and judicial processes. But these more sophisticated points are neither reconciled with the opening theme of the continuing force of obsolete legal concepts, nor applied even-handedly to all policy options. On the contrary, his discussion of the political-sociological limits of the law is confined pretty much to strengthening criticisms of policies which Stone downgrades.

Stone's conception of corporate social responsibility includes adherence to the law *plus* a consideration of the social impact of corporate actions and the making of an informed choice after reflection on that impact. He even speaks of responsibility "in a cognitive sense," and asks, "is it not possible that the society can structure the organization's information net so the corporation will get feedback on the harm it is causing through pollution?" It would seem that if a corporate management gets information on the effects of its pollution, thinks about it, and decides that on balance the corporate interest must prevail, a "responsible" decision has been made. Stone is overly sanguine as to the beneficial effects on corporate behavior of getting the "bad news" on social impact to the top management (although he does not rely exclusively on that for achieving corporate responsibility).

In order to ensure that information is gotten to management, and to help its reflections swing more toward the public interest, Stone develops a series of packages for reform to cope with various levels of seriousness of need for social control or corporate behavior. He would eliminate "inside" directors in major corporations, requiring that all directors be unaffiliated with management. He would define director liabilities, and, partly by these routes, assure that socially relevant information was brought to, and made the responsibility of, the board of directors. He would add public directors to large corporations; not more than 50 percent, however, appointed by a special commission or the SEC, but with a required approval by the corporation's own board.

These and other proposals are discussed with a great richness of detail and intelligence, and these alone make the book worthwhile. They still suffer however, from some very serious limitations. Most fundamentally, they are "bark without bite," nibbling at the forms of corporate power without getting at the substance; and even from their initial position of weakness, and assuming that they were taken seriously in the first place, they are likely to be sitting ducks for further legislative and court attrition. Several of Stone's proposals, such as eliminating inside directors, and public directors selected from the outside, could pose a modest threat to the control groups of large companies, yet would provide no assurance at all of any significant improvement in corporate behavior. As noted earlier, Stone does not apply his analysis of political limits to these favored proposals, but they do not stand up well to such scrutiny. They would be furiously opposed by business, mainly for their nuisance qualities rather than substantive threat, and they would be unlikely to enlist the support of any substantial interest groups or broad range of citizens. In terms of political cost-benefit analysis such proposals would seem less promising an avenue to corporate responsibility than public ownership—an option Stone doesn't even mention.

Stone's work rests on the premise that mild reformism directed to corporate power is both politically viable and likely to produce a substantial and positive impact on corporate behavior. If the premise is wrong, the short-run "practical" may in fact be a futile diversion. Thurman Arnold argued in 1937 that the social *role* of appeals for antitrust enforcement had been to keep reformers harmlessly occupied without posing any serious threat of interference with the sweep of corporate growth and consolidation. A systematic consideration of more drastic alternatives, or the more profound realism of a Veblen and an Arnold, seem to this reviewer more useful than efforts such as Stone's for purposes of the long-term education and political mobilization that could provide the groundwork for significant change.

Uncertain Saints: The Laity of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1900-1970

ALAN GRAEBNER

Greenwood, $15

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has for the past seven years been good copy in the religious and secular press. As one of the most raucous church battles of recent decades now seems likely to result in a major division, few people have had trouble in telling the good guys from the bad. The conflict in the almost 3 million member body is usually de-

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picted in terms of a belated re-run of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of years ago. Some of us have argued all along, however, that the central issue is the doctrine of the church; whether or not, acknowledging our differences on scriptural authority and interpretation, we can continue to live and work together in one communion. Those on "our side," called moderates, answer Yes. Those in effective control of the synod, led by Dr. J. A. O. Preus, persist in saying No, and thus, from our perspective, make division near inevitable.

Now Alan Graebner, an historian and scion of one of Missouri's dynastic families, throws new light on the controversy with a masterful and unprecedented study of the role of the laity from Missouri's beginnings up to the present crisis. As an historian, Graebner is keenly aware that, in writing a history of the laity, he must often rely on "dead reckoning." That is, the history of this church body, like that of others, has been written by clerics. Just because they write the history, however, does not necessarily mean that the clergy have been the victors. More than they know, or at least more than they like to admit, the clergy have been responding to changes in lay leadership. Indeed the ouster of moderate Oliver Harms as synod president in 1969 and his replacement by Preus was largely the result of a lay revolt, although, to be sure, a revolt under the direction of clerical discontents.

In the early 1840's, the synod began with a Saxon immigration under the leadership of Bishop Martin Stephan who laid claim to an authority that Innocent III might have envied. Following charges of fiscal and erotic irregularities, Stephan was deposed and the stage seemed set for a laicized church body along the congregationalist lines of American Protestantism. C. F. W. Walther, the second founder, so to speak, prevented this by an imaginative theological reconstruction that in fact, if not in theory, put the laity back in is place. Like immigrant Roman Catholicism after the trusteeship controversy, Missouri established a clerical structure in which the laity seemed content to pray, pay and obey.

It was not until World War I that some more Americanized and more wealthy laymen began to sense their potential power in raising funds for a rapidly growing, but badly managed, synodical program. Until the 1940s, lay organizations gravitated around money raising, beer socials and dart leagues. Then, in the forties and fifties, some theologians, taking their cue from the very influential work of Dutch theologian Henrik Kraemer began to expound a genuine "theology of the laity" that went far beyond being "pastor's helper." Prominent among these thinkers was O. P. Kretzmann, who died in October of last year and was for almost thirty years president of Valparaiso University in Indiana. Kretzmann and others could not know that their doing their work so well would be their undoing. That is, the most thoughtful and "progressive" laity began to take seriously their "work in the world" and left their more parochial brethren to take care of the lay end of the ecclesiastical shop.

There was much work to be done in the shop. In the 1930s, the Lutheran Laymen's League launched "The Lutheran Hour," which, under the leadership of Dr. Walter A. Maier, became the largest religious radio enterprise in the world. Later the laymen were to carry their success into television with "This is the Life." Thus, says Graeb-

> *For German Lutherans two matters long had political salience. One was the power—real and alleged—of Roman Catholicism. The other was the cluster of moral reforms that threatened the German way of life: Sabbatarianism, Prohibition, and, especially where they could be seen as aiding the latter, woman suffrage, initiative, and referendum. Both Catholicism and these moral reforms were negative referents for the German Lutherans.*
>
> —Uncertain Saints

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ner, the laity became the radio and television arm of the synod. The laypeople in charge of all this were little impressed by a theology of the laity that would impel and legitimate their vocations in the world. "Church work" was clearly more gratifying. In the early and mid sixties these were the laypeople recruited by right-wing clergy to lend aid in throwing out a leadership that had departed from the ways of "old Missouri."

In truth, the clerical rigorists had little use for any lay role not clearly under clerical direction. Graebner's documentation on this point is devastating. But, even if under clerical leadership, taking over a church body is heady business and the Lutheran Laymen's League clearly enjoyed a new sense of importance. This is not to say that "the moderates" lacked lay support. To the contrary, the lay backing for the anti-administration ELIM (Evangelical Lutherans in Mission) has been extraordinarily strong. But the ELIM laity, having discovered authentic Christian mission outside ecclesial structures, have neither the access nor the inclination to recapture the synodical machinery. Thus ELIM has become a gathering point for thousands of Missouri Lutherans fully prepared to be forced into exile.

Among American church bodies, the Missouri Synod has more parallels with immigrant Catholicism than with most Protestant groupings. Roman Catholic readers of Graebner will have no difficulty in relating the story to current movements among traditionalists as represented by, for example, *The Wanderer*. As for Missouri, there are some lessons that seem clear in retrospect. A genuine theology of the laity should have been developed at least two decades earlier than it was. When it came, it was responsive to laypeople wearied of being "pastor's helpers" and, for the most part, wearied of finding their legitimacy in terms of the institutional church. The alternative of "mission in the world" was fine, but it tended to diffuse the institutional influence of some of the most thoughtful and adventuresome laypeople, leaving church-based lay influence largely in the hands of the more regressive spirits. The consequences are sadly obvious.

If Missouri is divided within the next eighteen months, it might well lead to a major realignment of American Lutheranism, bringing together those exiled from Missouri with the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church, the two other major bodies, each with approximately three million members. The result could be a more united American Lutheranism better prepared to play its part in uniting the Church in America. This happy thought cannot obliterate, however, reflection on what might have been had not the breathtaking piety, intelligence, and hard work of laypeople been alienated for so long from the church body's institutional decisions. Graebner has written a fine book about one aspect of one relatively small—and, to many people's thinking, bizarre—part of the Church. The lessons are much larger than that.

Island People

COLEMAN DOWELL

New Directions, $12.50

JOHN KUEHL

Island People is the most recent work of a truly gifted American writer, Coleman Dowell. His first two books, *One of the Children Is Crying* (1968) —a realistic novel about family life— and *Mrs. October Was Here* (1974—a satirical fantasy about revolution—prepared the way for this brilliant contemporary allegory.

In *Island People* the notion that "EACH MAN IS AN ISLAND" is dramatized through geographical juxtapositions, just as the notion that "One need not be a Chamber/to be Haunted" is projected through architectural symbols.

Dowell's isolated and obsessed protagonist contends, "ALL THERE IS, IS FRAGMENTS, because a man, even the lowliest of the species, is divided among several persons, animals, worlds." This nameless figure finds bits and pieces of an elusive identity in characters from the nineteenth century past and the 20th century present. Passive and refined, middle-aged and bi-sexual, Protestant and southern, he periodically escapes the "prison of self" by loving or hating his alter ego, the aggressive and primitive, young and feminist, Jewish and northern Beatrix. She represents allegorical "bad," while the protagonist's dachshund, Miss Gold —"precious malleable strut of the earth"—represents allegorical "good." Their opposition poses "bitch" against bitch.

Having moved from 1968 realism through 1974 fantasy, Dowell has produced fiction that most nearly resembles a modern "poetic sequence" or "architectonic novel." This is apparent in his techniques, which, as in all skillful literary work, mirror the author's concerns.

For example, the narrative voice of *Island People* alternates between two dominant storytellers, creating what the protagonist calls "collaboration." He confesses, "I invented an 'I' who invented a 'Beatrix.' Which is to say that Beatrix may as easily have invented Chris" (his negative mask). This Chinese box method produces distortion, as when the protagonist claims "succubus" Beatrix has made him a queer anti-Semite. Metamorphoses of the narrative voice are accompanied by point of view shifts involving first, second and third person; but, even if we could pin the protean protagonist down, we would face an additional dilemma: "I have endowed the 'I' of this book with total recall—(though there will be a lot he will not want to recall, and will manage, sometimes, not to)."

It seems fitting that Dowell's dominant storytellers are a "failed playwright" (protagonist) and a "New Novelist" (Beatrix) because the inaccuracies both purvey characterize "the process of Art." In one instance, Christ admits "the facts given . . . by Victor over many a long afternoon had been distorted by . . . imagination," and, in another, the protagonist re-

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grets "romanticizing" Low's "Psycopathy" and reducing "my complex Indian to a single-strand nobility." Since in *Island People* reality is mental rather than physical, verbal rather than actual, the protagonist may also proclaim: "When I write 'he ran,' I see neither him nor running. I see two words." As Life becomes Art, Art becomes Game, so, besides several allusions to literary personages like D.H. Lawrence, there are numerous references to literary procedures like "Some compulsive neatness or need, some awareness of the circularity of events, perhaps, insists that I end this composition before the coda, as it began." The Art-Game has both a positive and a negative side. On the one hand, through "the act of creation, we 'forgive' the objects of our imagination;" yet, on the other, we erect a "word-jail," in which even the "personal desire for continuity is . . . mainly literary."

Fragmentation, the principal motif of *Island People*, dictates structure as well as focus. The book juxtaposes various genres—journal entries, stories, essays, poems, etc.—and thus conveys the "erratic journeying" of the "Saint of Wanderers, Christopher, or plain Chris." Like the latter's stories, this "journeying" is "without endings;" like his play, *Coursing*, it is "static."

The journal entries are misleading, since at first glance they suggest a chronological continuity replete with Christmas, May Day and Memorial Day which closer scrutiny dismisses. For instance, the entry marked "March 10" follows the entry marked "March 14." Time-past and time-present both fuse and separate in complex temporal patterns, as Island and City both fuse and separate in complex spatial patterns, to reveal how one affects the other, and to demonstrate that "Distance and time" are "the same," that "We exist simultaneously with ourselves."

The sectional headings of Dowell's —"THE GAME," "CAUGHT," "TRIALS," "THE SENTENCE"—indicate the protagonist's nightmare world has *moral* continuity. Indeed, he conducts "his own trial for the murder of a love—nameless, undefined; whether of person or pride, his own or other's or others', or of talent or judgment, he cannot tell."

Though *Island People* is a brilliant contemporary allegory incorporating themes and techniques associated with achievements like T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and William Gaddis's *The Recognitions*, it also excels at the older literary attributes. We are given memorable individuals who participate in vivid scenes which range from the comic to the tragic. Furthermore, as Tennessee Williams has observed, the "level of prose writing" resembles "a long, marvelously sustained narrative poem." One brief passage will illustrate Coleman Dowell's finely-wrought style:

> I turned on the Christmas lights. In the glowing room, fire fallen to embers, the Dresdens looked like young dreamers in a ballet. Each sleeping profile thrust upward carving out the wine-jelly Christmas sheen of the room. They were perfectly strange to me, characterless as people sleeping on a stage when the curtain goes up. Dimly felt tendrils ran from my breast to summer and turned back and groped for the Dresdens but did not touch them, restrained by my desire.

Sane Asylum: Inside The Delancey Street Foundation

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own humble admission, they *all* work; according to their own unbiased report, no other program works; and whatever it is they claim to do, no one has much evidence for it. In other words, the field has become, in large part, a con. With government dollars as the incentive, program promoters have vied with one another to invent eye-catching, identity-creating names, have clamored robustly, muscled a lot, lied a little, and brought the art of grantsmanship to new levels of street-learned sophistication.

But there are, in California at least, two noteworthy exceptions. John Maher, the King of Delancey Street in San Francisco, says of Chuck Dederich, the father of Synanon, that, "Dederich impressed me because he took no money." The encomium seems an awfully simple one; it by no means catches the complexity of either of these now famed communities. But it is that basic formula that sets the two essentially apart from all the rest, permitting them to attend religiously to the job at hand, and to it alone.

These two books are about Delancey Street, the San Francisco-based family of ex-addicts and ex-cons, or rather about the tough/tender, paradoxical son of Irish immigrants who created it and sent it mushrooming in four meteoric years. To put it simply, John Maher is brilliant and convincing; but even as this is written, I shudder to think what he would do with that stiff bit of flattery in one of his own "games." In a few short years, attention has been focused on him because of his flair, his irreverence, his wit, and presumably at this point, his success. Here, in these two books, is the odyssey of John Maher from Bronx Irish ghetto, through parochial schools, where he was "class agitator," through streets and jails, to Synanon, and now to what may be a major political reformation. The result is a tough-talking ex-con, ex-junkie, once a street-fighting hood, and a voracious reader and philosopher, who sprinted through Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, Goethe, Rilke and Mann, and many others by the time he was in the seventh grade. With expressed disdain for the academic pretensions of the soft social sciences, he nonetheless uses them artfully, aided by his Ph.D. consort psychologist, Mimi Silbert, once J. P. Sartre's personal secretary.

But to Delancey Street itself. A great deal of copy in both books is given to the playing of the "games." In both, long excerpts from the "games" appear to be literal, presumably unedited; and they are absorbing. Taken almost unchanged from Synanon, they have been the focus and the most publicized element of community life, both at Synanon and Delancey. Most residents, at least in their early months, are consumed by self-hatred and deeply repressed guilt. The volcanic eruptions in the "games" help them spew out the guilt; name-calling helps to make contact. For one who is convinced of his nothingness, the howls of the "games" constitute in fact a birth cry enroute to a new life. At Delancey, the "games" reach mammoth proportions in the marathon 48-hour sleepless weekend dissipations.

> *"When you're incompetent, and got no education," says John Maher, "you can be either one of two things: you can be a bum, or a great social leader. I failed as a bum, so I had no options." He is only half joking, for Maher, at thirty-five, a former addict and convict, is today the cutting edge of the most exciting social experiment in America.*
> —John Maher of Delancey Street

Explanations of all this are less than adequate; but Hampden-Turner appears to have an insatiable compulsion to explain. Reading him, one gets a rather bad case of psychic bends, moving abruptly from the "straight talk" of the "games" to condensed academic analyses. But these contrasts are at the heart of Delancey Street itself. Without the support of the communities that both Synanon and Delancey create, the "games," however essential, could be destructive, leaving victims stripped and quivering. But the balance of the attacks of the "games" and the supporting concern of the "family" creates the combined world the addict never had. It is precisely in the nature of this community that Maher departs from Synanon. The only three organizations, says Maher, that have cured a significant number of drug addicts are, in order, Red China, the Black Muslims, and Synanon. But they have done so only at the tremendous cost of imposing total conformity and extended dependency upon the members. That dependency, for which Synanon has now been frequently criticized, creates, in Maher's mind, a limited experience that tends to alienate intelligent people. Delancey Street moves beyond that, continuing the developmental evolution through indoctrination, total dependency, and finally to a gradual and independent reinsertion into society at large.

In a somewhat accommodated sense, games are also played out in the social parodies that characterize so many of Maher's civic contracts. Combining Irish wit and Machiavellian intrigue, Maher refuses to confirm evil by taking it seriously. So a cadre of Delancey Streeters meets a convict, released to their custody, at the gates of San Quentin, in vintage black cars, pin-striped suits, smoke curling from cigars under wide-brimmed hats, and parade him off, Mafia style, extracting from the prison guards a deference they would never otherwise display. The sense of parody is also played out in the very notion of locating these ex-cons and ex-addicts, not south of Market Street, but in mansions in San Francisco's posh Pacific Heights. In Delancey's

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own rather strained pun, it is all the theater of the abhorred.

Woven deeply into the fabric of the community program is a very dualistic point-counter-point theme, which seems to irritate then fascinate Turner, who proceeds to dissect the dialectic. The "games," the work in the Delancey Street businesses, the politics, and the life in the club itself all pull in different directions. Appropriate behavior depends entirely upon the context in which a person is operating. In "games," good behavior is impulsive, irreverent, playful, rebellious, and egalitarian; at work, good behavior is self-controlled, deferential, serious, authoritative, task-oriented, and hierarchical. This almost Hegelian thesis-antithesis produces finally a happy synthesis and celebration. It is some times an abrasive wedding of desperation, violence, philosophy, and hope. But it is this dialectical swing that makes Delancey Street unique, and it could only have been born of a mind as paradoxical as Maher's. It fashions a complete educational process, breaking down to build up, shaping behavior, rewarding, punishing. And still beyond the development of community and family, Delancey Streeters, led by Maher, erupt into the body politic, using the system's own measures to jam it and challenge it in an approach that is almost Byzantine in complexity.

No review, no books could capture the massive irony, the combination of intensity, devastation, wit, and solidly based philosophical genius of John Maher and Delancey Street. Both of these books make an attempt; both do it from singularly different points of view. Turner's is personal experience, with perhaps too much Turner. It is an inside view that provides better insight, though it is at times pedantic, especially in a laboriously rationalistic appendix. Sales, on the other hand, is straight reporter. There is little that is personal. It is narrative, descriptive, and factual. But, however short they both fall, both books are portraits of the Maher cult; and of the "Maherishi," as Turner dubs him. And as they intend to do, both succeed in getting the reader to want to know this den of thieves and its Robin Hood much better.

REVIEWERS

ROBERT PHILLIPS is completing a book-length study of the fiction of William Goyen for Twayne.

C. PETER RIPLEY is the author of *Slaves and Freedmen in Civil War Louisana.*

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS, pastor of St. John the Evangelist in Brooklyn, is the author of *Time Toward Home* (Seabury).

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A Brief Life

JUAN CARLOS ONETTI

Translated by Hortense Carpentier

Grossman, $10

RONALD DE FEO

Though he is considered to be one of the most influential of contemporary Latin American authors, the Uruguayan novelist and short story writer Juan Carlos Onetti has received little attention in this country. Onetti has been producing fiction for many years, yet relatively few of his works have been translated into English. Prior to *A Brief Life* (first published in Spanish some twenty-five years ago), the only novel of his available in English was *The Shipyard,* a strange and haunting book hardly noticed by critics when it was published here in 1968. Of his short stories, only a few have been translated, and one must search rather hard to locate the anthologies in which those excellent pieces appear.

Perhaps the neglect can be attributed, in part, to the themes and subject matter Onetti has chosen to explore, and to the uncompromising way in which he approaches his material. For throughout his fiction Onetti deals with loss and decay. His characters, who are often so vague and alienated that they seem to be on the verge of fading away completely, are acutely aware of passing time. For the most part, they are middle-aged or old, and as they advance closer and closer to extinction, they are obsessed not only with their aging bodies but also with their failures in life, mistakes and missed opportunities, the absurd routines they have followed. They seemed to have moved unconsciously through life, but they now ask themselves, Where has all the time gone? How have they arrived at this point? Since the future holds nothing but darkness, since they are too old to hope for change, they often retreat into the past, remembering and sometimes inflating moments of happiness. Occasionally, they try to give meaning and relevance to their present lives by engaging in ridiculous, but comforting, rituals. (Larsen, the shadowy protagonist of *The Shipyard,* becomes general manager of a deserted, ruined shipyard, and spends his time examining files and records of the past.) Their view of the world they now live in is so colored by their obsessions and fears that everywhere they turn they see signs of decay. When Larsen studies the pregnant wife of a fellow worker at the shipyard, he thinks: "She's finished, burnt and arid as a field after a summer fire, deader than my grandmother; and it's not impossible, I'll bet, that what she's carrying is dead, too." In the chilling little story, "Welcome, Bob," the failed narrator actually manages to derive some pleasure from the deteriorating process—he sits back to watch the spectacle of an enemy aging and failing in much the same manner he already has.

Onetti's world, then, is a particularly gray and grim one. The reader finds little of the color, that touch of the exotic, that is to be found in the work of other Latin American writers (in the books, say, of García Márquez, Vargas Llosa or Guimaraes Rosa). Much of the action and drama in his work is of an internal nature. His landscapes are mental ones, and often we must follow nothing more than the progress of an obsession or the move-

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ment toward non-being. Though Onetti has been compared to Faulkner because of his intricate style and his creation of the mythical town of Santa María (his own Yoknapatawpha County), Onetti's thematic concerns recall the work of the two modern masters of decay, Svevo and Beckett. In a sense, however, Onetti is even more relentless than those authors, for his dark subject matter is rarely brightened by sparks of humor.

A Brief Life, which some critics consider to be Onetti's finest book, is an especially grim work. Throughout this rather long novel there is a concentration on things concluding—jobs, marriages, relationships, lives. A quietly desperate and hopeless tone is established at the beginning of the book when the narrator Juan María Brausen, a miserable, middle-aged advertising copywriter, reflects on his wife who is in a hospital having her cancerous breast removed. The wife's condition and the operation point to some of the dominant themes of the novel—loss, decay, mortality. Like other Onetti protagonists, Brausen longs for a second chance, wishes he could break from the pattern of his unsuccessful life, find a new existence outside of time. Around him he sees friends and acquaintances growing old, learns of them making humiliating attempts to recapture the past—the pathetic, aging Miriam, for example, who tries to move seductively and youthfully along the beach to attract men painting a waterfront hotel. Brausen comes to believe that a person should not be condemned to a single life. By projecting himself into various roles he manages to shed his skin and lose himself in another, less directly threatening world. When he physically enters the apartment of the woman next door, he is fascinated by its effect on him: "I was moving into the atmosphere of a brief life in which there was not enough time to become involved, to repent or to age." From his creation of Arce, the lover of the prostitute La Queca, he shifts easily to another creation, Dr. Diaz Grey, a typically burnt-out Onetti case who is a central figure in some of the author's other fiction. Though the various identities Brausen devises enable him to temporarily remove himself from his own particular world and situation, they are all to some extent reflections, however distorted, of the being and the beings he has left behind.

The obsessive focus on failure and deterioration throughout the novel often yields striking and powerful passages and images, but it does sometimes make for a monotony of tone. The descriptions of pathetic gestures, the record of sad, meditative conversations are fascinating up to a point, but then a sense of repetition, of a single note being struck begins to tire the reader. In *The Shipyard*, vagueness of character wasn't especially disturbing because there was a strong enough (and mysterious enough) dramatic structure to guide one along. But in *A Brief Life*, which is a much more open-ended and free book, there is frequently vagueness both of character and

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dramatic purpose. We often feel that Onetti is working around his material rather than penetrating it. He sometimes intellectualizes to such an extent that the material becomes too obscure and private to be interpreted.

Still, in *A Brief Life* Onetti once again demonstrates his ability to capture the despair and anxiety of characters moving toward the brink of oblivion. Though we come away from this difficult novel feeling perplexed and somewhat dissatisfied, impressed more by certain sections of the book than by the book as a whole, we realize that we have been in the company of a unique and challenging artist who is intent on rendering nothing less than the terrors of existence.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 579)

womb is devoted to growth in size and strength. It is interesting to note that pro-abortionists do not challenge the existence of human life in the womb, but base their argument on a claim that it is not meaningful life, and that the unborn child is not a person, according to their definition of person.

Speaking to the second fact—that all laws are an expression of someone's morality—I would cite the same example of the 18th or "Prohibition" amendment. Actually this amendment was not an expression of public morality, but was the expression of a hardcore group of social theorists who felt that they knew what was best for all of us.

Truly there is no comparison between this amendment and the proposed "Right-to-Life" amendment. Public morality—morality shared by most people—always finds expression in law. We have laws against theft (thou shall not steal), murder (thou shall not kill), prostitution, vandalism, rape, drunken driving, etc., etc. When human beings are killed on the streets, an aroused society imposes its morality on the killers and incarcerates them.

The difference between killing in the streets and killing in the womb is a difference in location. Human beings are being killed in both places. As I have the right and even the obligation to speak out in the first instance, so also do I have the right and the obligation to speak out in the second.

Human nature has its defects too, and it is necessary to protect ourselves by enacting protective laws. There are too many people who don't know the first thing about the development of the child in the womb, and they are easy prey to those who advocate abortion as a means to procure social benefits. The people of "Right-to-Life" are attempting to restore legal protection to an entire class of human beings, and our sole argument is the nature of the child in the womb. When everyone knows *what* is in the womb, an aroused society will again protect all its members.

ELIZABETH D. CORBETT

Denton, Texas

To the Editors: Unlike Edward H. Laylin ("Letters," June 18) I hope that the editors of *Commonweal* will support a "Pro-Life" amendment to the Constitution. Mr. Laylin is against such an amendment because he feels the parallels between the "prohibition" efforts of his Methodist church and the "Right-to-Life" efforts of Catholics are "too pat to be ignored."

Such parallels are also too pat to be believed. Ignoring Mr. Laylin's attempts to polarize abortion into a "Catholics versus the World" issue (after all, many Protestants are deeply committed to pro-life concepts, too), there are other flaws in such thinking. If Catholics were really trying to compel everybody to follow "their concept of ethical principles" we could write hundreds of new laws. For example, we might try to ban voluntary sterilization or insist that people be forced to go to church once a week. Actions such as these would be silly and would be parallel to the Methodist attempts to ban liquor.

But when we speak of abortion we are speaking of the deliberate taking of human life. We are saying, as a society, that some lives are worth more than others and that all men are not equal in the sight of God. The sanctity and dignity of life given to man by God is not an exclusively Catholic doctrine —it is one Christians share.

If parallels which are "too pat to be ignored" must be trotted out, let us bring forth once again those drawn from a society which saw whole classes of people (Jews and others) deemed "non-persons" and thus dispensable. Or let us remember the time when our own courts and citizens ruled slaves were "non-persons." Just as we are now ashamed that such things could have happened, so we will be ashamed that we declared certain very young humans "non-persons" and allowed them to be killed.

LAURA B. KENNELLY

Los Angeles, Cal.

To the Editors: From some perspectives, the letter of Methodist Edward H. Laylin [June 18] opposing a Right to Life Constitutional amendment is amusing. I particularly enjoyed the comment that some of his best friends are *bishops.* This is the ultimate in tolerance.

Also, his equating drinking and prohibition laws with abortions and right-to-life laws might appeal to those who are amused by distortions. It is something like the earnest young woman at an abortion debate who demanded to know how I could have my dog spayed and be against abortion.

What is disturbing, however, is the persistence of the idea that those of us who want to see abortions made illegal are motivated by some compulsion to force our concepts of morality on others. It is my own regard for the basic rights of individuals, including the right to be let alone and even to be wrong so long as the fundamental rights of others are not invaded, that prompts me to guard the most basic right of all—the right to life. Of what value is any human right if the right to life is not protected? When the right to exist is taken away, all other rights go with it. We must keep an eye on our priorities.

WALTER R. TRINKAUS
Professor of Law
Loyola University School of Law

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